

Your Garden

Autumn 2011

for people who love gardens

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- FLOWERS
- VEGIES

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(Plans inside)

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- Tropical
- Autumnal

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you eat!

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- Autumn's best orchids
- Using wildflowers
- How to store surplus produce

It's so easy Growing your own

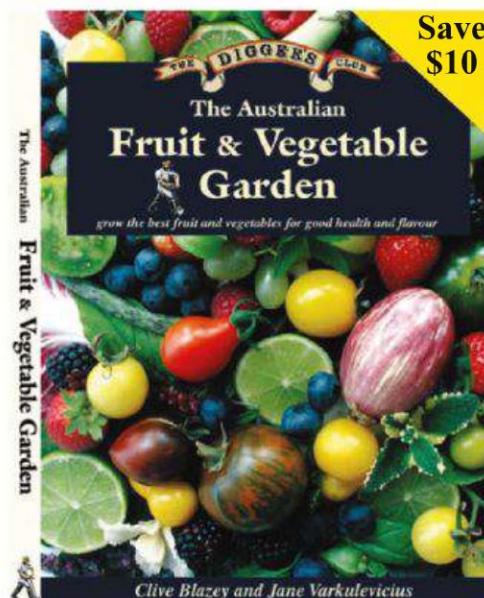
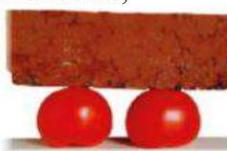


Isn't the single most important step to a self-sufficient lifestyle growing your own fruit, vegetables and flowers? "Growing heirlooms at home rather than buying rock hard hybrids that are shipped thousands of miles cuts Greenhouse emissions by 30%" says Clive Blazey, founder of The Digger's Club.

Our solar-powered heirlooms are totally renewable, coming fresh from your backyard. No GMOs, no chemicals, organic and so healthy.

"The finest tomatoes I've eaten in 50 years."

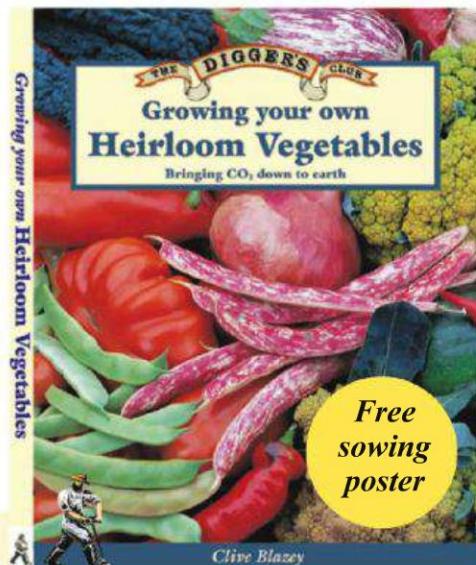
– Kevin Heinze said when he first tasted Tommy Toe. Heirloom vegetables are not "nostalgia in edible form" but simply the freshest, tastiest vegies a gardener can plant; for what's old is new! Hybrid supermarket tomatoes need lots of fuel and coal power to reach market unlike purely solar powered heirlooms.



We will help you grow your own. Over 188 fruits, including heirloom apples, nuts, berries and herbs, gourmet garlic, potatoes and sub-tropical fruits and vegetables.

Suits all climates and the tiniest mini-plot. Explains pollination, pruning and shows how to integrate flowers, fruit and vegetables to save space and avoid pest problems.

**RRP: \$39.95,
Special joining price: \$29.95**



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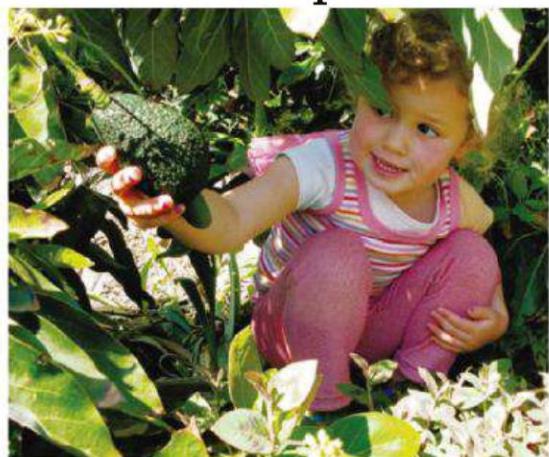
It is all explained in our 96 page hardcover book *Growing Your Own Heirloom Vegetables*. Clive Blazey

says "Digger's began rescuing heirlooms 18 years ago." We will show you how to grow your own Lazy Housewife bean, Afghan Purple carrots, Golden beet, Armenian cucumber, Tuscan Kale, Moon and Stars watermelon and over 50

heirloom tomatoes.

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Is there any greater pleasure than watching our children pick their first apple, strawberry or pumpkin? We have preserved the best fruit varieties, potatoes, garlic, and heirloom tomatoes and strawberries so you can enjoy the tastiest food you won't find even in the best restaurants.

Join the Diggers Club

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The Digger's Club is Australia's largest garden club helping gardeners from Hobart to Cairns grow tastier vegetables and fruit, plus the most beautiful flowers organically. Seventy percent of our flowers are drought tolerant, so you can save water for your fruit and vegie garden.

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- 6 catalogues sent **FREE** see below
- **FREE** entry to Australia's first organically certified gardens, Heronswood in Dromana and St Erth at Blackwood. **Save \$20.**

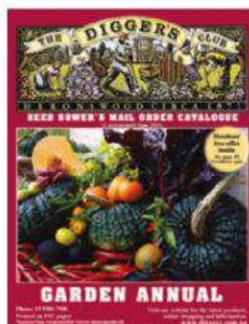


Both with nurseries, gardens & cafés.
Select from Australia's largest collection
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*Open everyday,
just 70 mins from Melbourne.*

Heirloom seeds, fruits and perennials

Our four garden magazines and two catalogues will help you grow your own food organically free of chemicals and fertilizers. We can help you solve climate change and reduce your water bills whilst still creating a beautiful flower garden. Over 1,800 rare seeds and plants described.

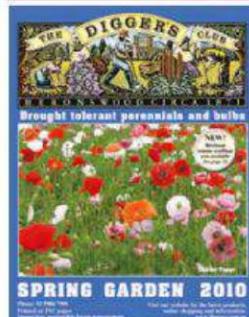


GARDEN ANNUAL - Full range of heirloom vegetables and cottage flowers (600 items) **64 pages - 600 colour pictures**

SPRING GARDEN - Drought tolerant plants including pelargoniums, clivias, puyas, fabulous fruits and stories to get your vegie garden started.
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Summer Memories

Modern Shrub Rose

One of England's bestsellers is set to make its mark in gardens all over Australia. Slightly fragrant, nostalgic blooms adorn the disease-resistant bush. The excellence of this Rose has been recognised by receiving the Silver Medal & Best Shrub awards at the 2010 Trial. About 1.2m x 80cm.



Best Shrub of Trial



Silver Medal

AWARD WINNING ROSES

No flower has greater universal appeal than the Rose. This year, Treloar Roses are living up to their well-deserved reputation as Australia's leading Rose supplier by introducing some exciting new releases, adding to their already extensive collection, which includes three award winners from the 2010 National Rose Trial Garden awards.



Silver Medal

Most Pest & Disease Tolerant Rose of 2010 Trial



Bronze Medal

Wildcat ♂

Floribunda Rose

This carefree Rose will brighten up any garden with its eye-catching blooms and award-winning disease resistance. Clusters of flowers with a mild fragrance are produced continuously all season, making this a highly desirable Rose. Approximately 80cm tall x 40cm wide.

Lupo ♂

Mini / Patio Rose

A very dense and compact miniature Rose that grows around 50cm high x 40cm wide. The flowers, which repeat well, are as brilliant as they are resistant to the elements, making this Bronze Medal-winner an ideal all-rounder for a range of uses.

Order online at www.treloarroses.com.au



Purple Rain ♂

Groundcover Rose

An exciting new colour for groundcover. The purple rosette-style flowers are produced in large clusters, resulting in a thrilling display on an easy-to-grow and very hardy plant. About 50cm high x 70cm wide, Purple Rain is guaranteed to please.

Silver Ghost ♂

Modern Shrub Rose

A fantastic landscaping Rose whose beauty has to be seen to be believed. From early spring to late autumn this disease-free shrub is smothered in pristine white single blooms. The Silver Ghost is approximately 1.2m tall x 60cm wide.

Mon Petit Chou ♂

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A very unusual variety, combining the erect growth habit of a modern Hybrid Tea Rose with the nostalgic flowers of heritage varieties. Mon Petit Chou is a bushy and amply branched plant reaching a height of approximately 1m.

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Your Garden

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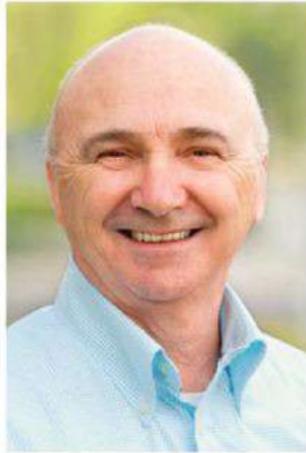
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editor's greetings



Hello

What a great summer it's been so far. Plenty of rain, plenty of sunshine and not too hot. At least that's what it's been like for me and I hope yours has been equally benign. Good spring and summer rains usually point to a good autumn for gardeners too and after all the dry years of recent times with their water restrictions, searing heat and shocking fires, this soft, moist season is a welcome relief. As soon as March arrives the nurseries will be receiving all their new season stocks of both flowers and vegies, which you can plant anytime in March, April or May for late winter and spring results. If you've already been swept up in the current vegie growing craze, keep at it. And if you're still wavering, take the plunge. With less heat to dry them out and fewer pests to ruin them, it's easier to grow food crops in the cooler months than over the spring and summer. Just make sure you're planting varieties that are suitable for the months ahead – you'll find these listed in our helpful chart on page 130.

To all those readers who took up our special offer on the book *Rural Australian Gardens* in the last issue, I hope you're enjoying it. And because it's clear you do like good gardening books, we've got a terrific new offer for you on page 88 of this issue. This time they're all practical books that will help you with day-to-day gardening, as well as plant identification and selection.

Warmest regards,

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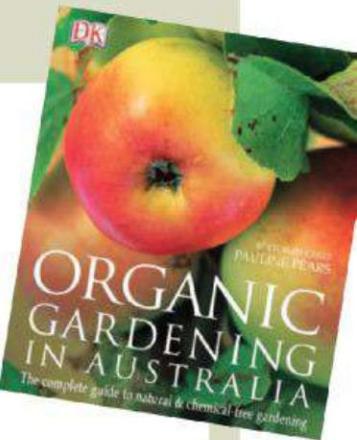
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Our contributors



Sandy de Beyer is a photographer, stylist and writer. Once described in *New Woman* magazine as a 'creative romantic', Sandy brings years of experience with both decorating and gardening magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Home Beautiful*, *Gardens and Outdoor Living* and *Burke's Backyard*. In addition, Sandy operates her own photo library, which specialises in gardens, decorating and outdoor living.



Lisa Habermann is a horticulturist and journalist who lives with her young family, five chickens and a water tank at Westernport Bay, Victoria. She is particularly interested in renovating old gardens, loves retro style and bases her garden design around colour and form. Having worked on revegetation projects as well as in wholesale and retail nurseries, Lisa has a passion for growing local native plants, herbs and vegetables.



Steve Falcioni has been a plant addict all his life. Having lived and worked as a horticulturist in London and Vancouver, Steve currently resides in Sydney. There, in an inner city apartment, he focuses on horticultural photography and writing at the same time as running his own gardening website (visit www.theplantaddict.com). As if that wasn't enough to keep him busy, Steve is branching out into literature, with his first gardening novel due for completion this year.



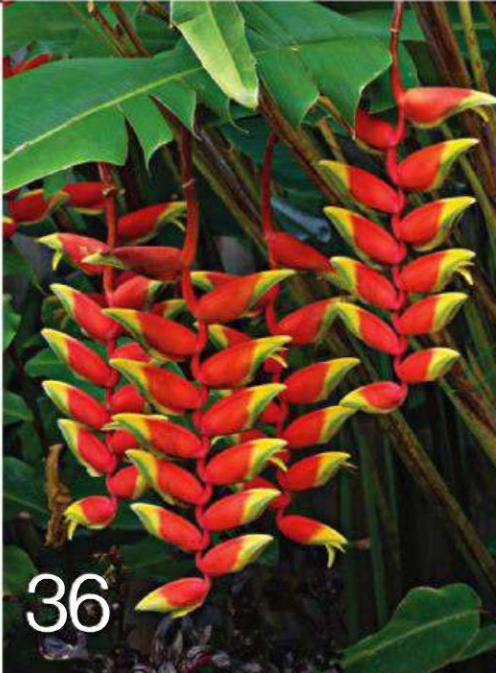
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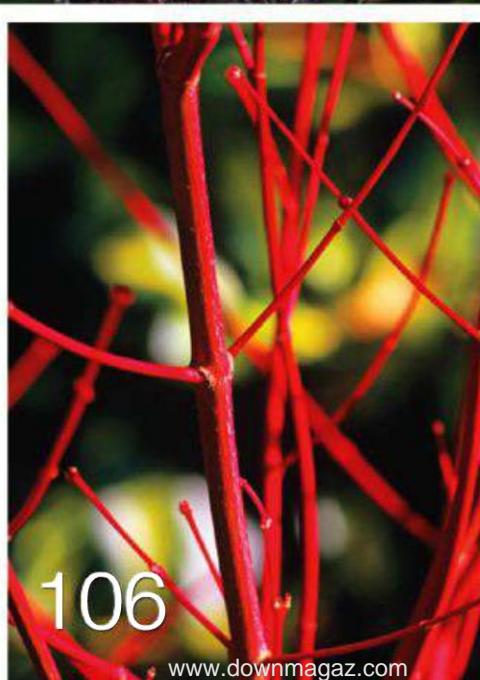
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Your Garden

AUTUMN 2011

Cover image

In pots or the garden, cheery Gerberas are still happily producing flowers in autumn. Outside, grow in full sun in an airy, free-draining spot.

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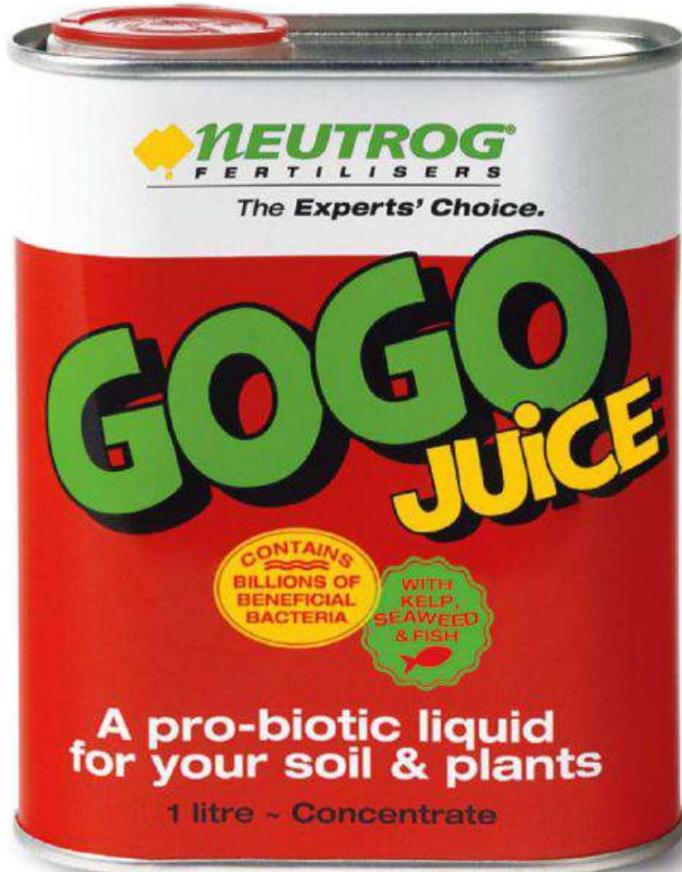


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"I first tried GOGO Juice on my iceberg roses, the results were impressive, over a short period of time there was no black spot or aphids present and the bushes appeared much larger due to the healthy new foliage"

Graham Douglass, Rose Society of South Australia and Chairman of Wynn Vale Community Gardens



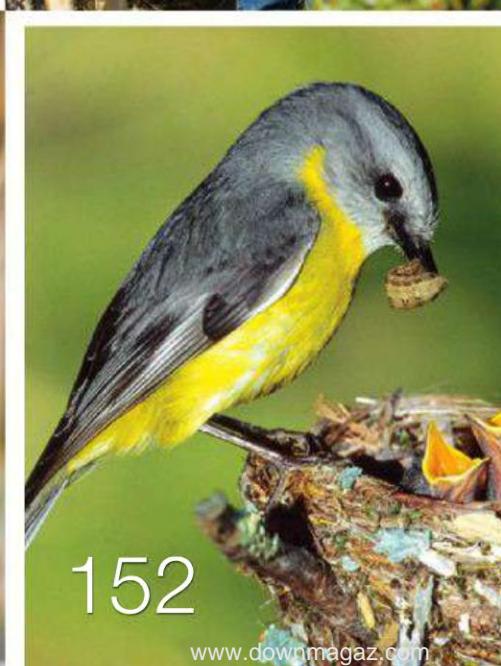
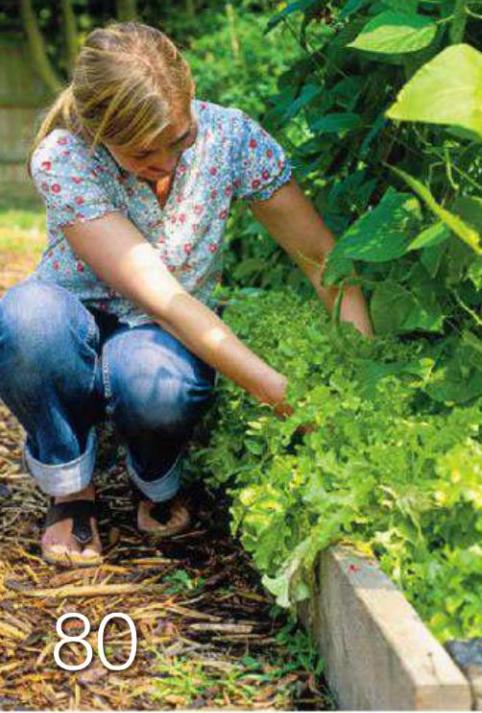
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Your Garden

AUTUMN 2011

Gardening's other great season is here and its cooler days are ideal for getting out and into planting and picking.

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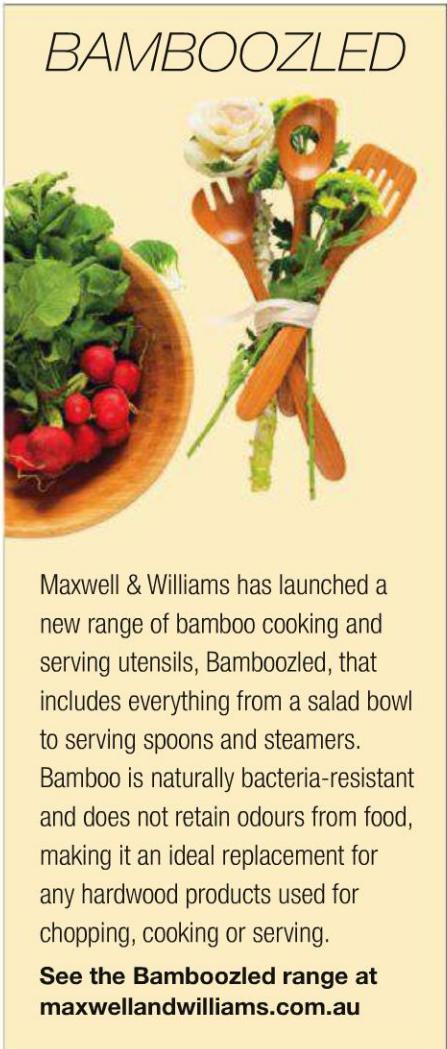


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snippets

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See the Bamboozled range at maxwellandwilliams.com.au

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how to spend it on home & garden



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ZAPE11A. 'Cameron Peach Pink Lips' Peach with splashes of pink	\$30
ZAI12. 'Blushing Belle' A creamy apricot interspecific	\$25

2 YEAR OLD SEEDLINGS

★ EU1. 'Belgium Hybrids' Line bred to be compact (dwarf) and to flower in two years: orange red flowers this spring	\$10
★ ZAYG6. 'Yellow Green Girl' Yellow with green centre.....	\$35
★ ZAY11. 'Butterball' Deep yellow open flowers.....	\$40
★ ZAY12. 'Snowflake' Opens light cream, aged to near white \$40	
★ ZAS1. 'C. caulescens'	\$20

3 YEAR OLD SEEDLINGS

ZAPE12. 'Cameron Peach Green Centre' Deep apricot with green infusion, particularly intense in the throat	\$38
ZAR13. Red Green Throat	\$30
★ ZAPE2. 'Chubbs Peach Large flower head recurved petals of peach	\$35
ZAR16. 'Berties Bronze' Internationally known bronze	\$40

4 YEAR OLD SEEDLINGS

ZAPA3. 'Pastel Blush' x 'Soft Touch' Large flowers, pastel shades - from yellow to peach to pink	\$40
ZAM1. mixed multipetals Mixed colours: eight petals	\$30
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what's new

the latest plants for summer

Compiled by Helen Thompson



Lomandra 'Frosty Top'



Diascia 'Breezee Appleblossom'

Lomandra confertifolia ssp *rubiginosa* 'Frosty Top'

A tough, drought-hardy grey-green foliage plant, 'Frosty Top' is great for a low formal border, mass planted or in containers. It has an upright bushy habit and the fine arching leaves can reach up to 40cm in height. Creamy yellow flowers, tinted purple at the base, are visible from autumn to spring. It can be pruned after flowering.

Austraflora. Find more details at www.austraflora.com

Diascia barbarea 'Breezee' series

A compact mounding plant that is smothered in flowers during autumn, winter and spring. Can be used in pots, rockeries or garden bed borders. They are fast growing plants that need regular watering and fortnightly applications of a weak solution of a balanced fertilizer. Can be pruned as flowers fade to rejuvenate for a second flush.

Aussie Winners. Go to www.aussiewinners.com.au

Grevillea bipinnatifida x *thrysoides* 'Pick O' the Crop'

A free-flowering ground cover for garden beds, retaining walls and large containers, this can also be grown as a low spreading shrub. Foliage is finely divided, grey in colour and presents a beautiful contrast to the red flowers, which are longer and appear in autumn, winter and spring. Prune after flowering.

Austraflora. Visit www.austraflora.com



Grevillea 'Pick o' the Crop'

'Frosty Top's' creamy yellow flowers are tinted purple at the base and visible from autumn to spring, bringing intense colour saturation to its softly spiky form.

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what's new

cont'd



Gaura 'Breakaway Candy Stripe'

***Gaura* 'Breakaway Candy Stripe'**

Versatile, clump forming perennial with butterfly-like flowers on fine stems above the foliage. Will tolerate light frosts and withstand short periods of dryness once established. Perfect for small gardens and pots, in mixed plantings and as a background plant. Prefer sunny positions, but will perform well in light, dappled shade. Regularly remove old flower stems to encourage more blooms.

Ramm Botanicals. www.ramm.com.au

***Kunzea baxterii nana* 'Mandy's Surprise'**

A heavy flowering dwarf kunzea that will grow to 1m x 1m, making it much smaller than the original species. Bright red flowers appear in abundance from autumn to spring. It will tolerate sandy to clay soils and prefers a sunny or partly shaded position. It's drought hardy and tolerates light frosts and coastal conditions.

Touch of Class. More about Mandy at www.greenhillspropagation.com.au



***Kunzea baxterii nana* 'Mandy's Surprise'**



Grevillea 'Fire Cracker'
Boasts an extensive flowering period that extends from April through to October, with a compact rounded habit and small evergreen foliage. Use for informal borders, low water gardens, containers and

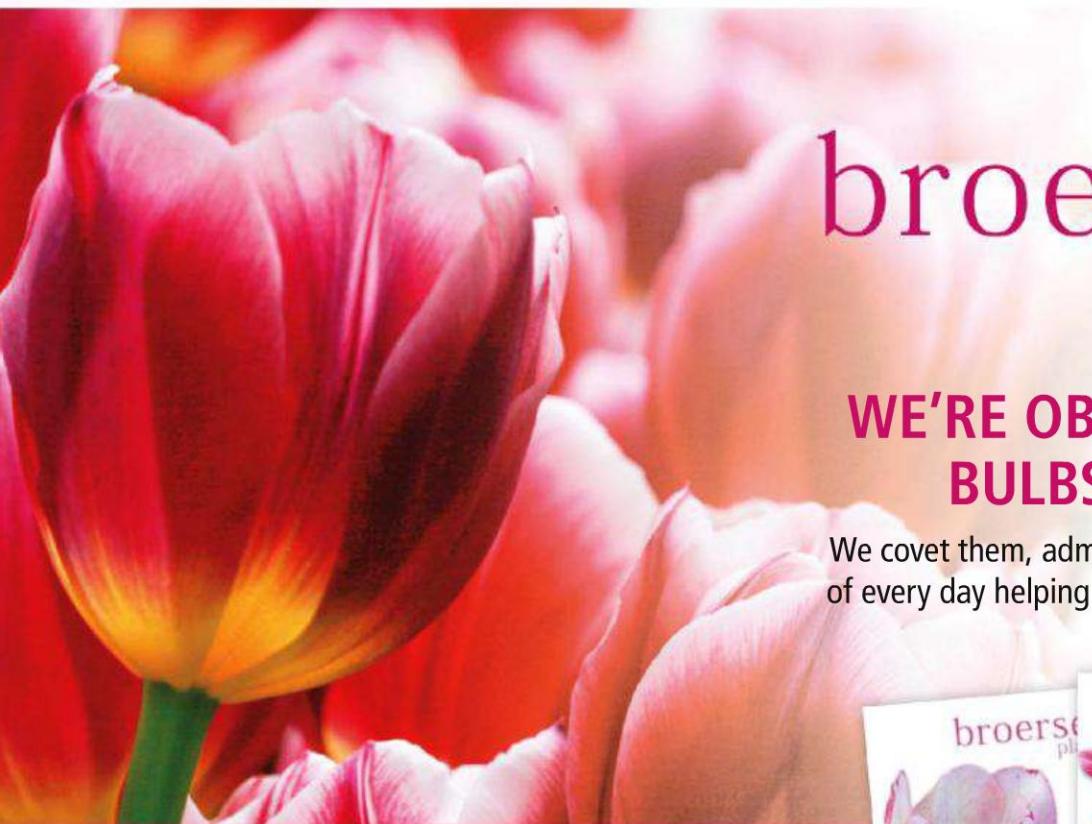
coastal areas. Extremely hardy in a well draining soil and frost and drought tolerant once established. Prune after flowering to encourage a dense habit and profuse flowering for next season.

Plant Management Australia. Find more details at www.pma.com.au

Feijoa sellowiana

A slow-growing shrub that reaches up to 5m high in the ground or up to 3m in a pot. It prefers cool winters and moderate summers in full sun or part shade. The fruit, commonly known as guavasteen or pineapple guava, tastes like a combination of pineapple, guava, strawberry and lemon with refreshing overtones of spearmint and the flower petals are also edible.

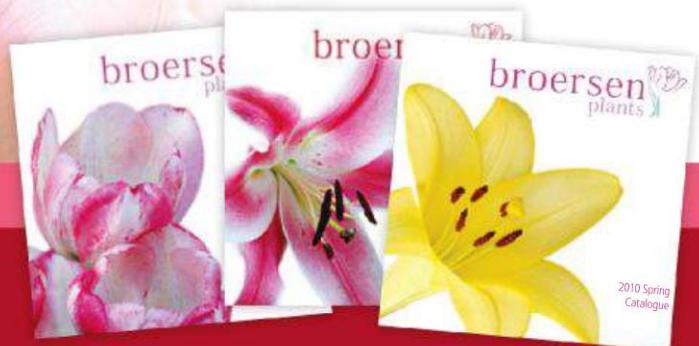
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Sandy de Beyer

No trunk damage, no dead grass

Trees growing park-like out of the lawn look great but cause problems. You either have grass that needs trimming right up to the trunk or bare patches, depending on how much sun falls under the branches or the depth of trees' roots. If you use a whipper snipper, you can damage trunks and ring bark the tree. To solve these problems, set metal edges into the lawn and fill them with crushed rock as a decorative, but effective mulch. Suddenly trees become part of the garden design.



Potted & pretty

We often look at vegetable gardens as practical, utilitarian beds filled with health-giving, organic produce and sometimes forget to look at these plants in the same aesthetic way we look at more decorative ones. What colour and texture are the leaves and what shape does the plant form? Vegetables can be decorative and nutritious too. Look at the wondrous purple and silver foliage of cabbage and Tuscan kale, the pendant red jewels of chilli and the myriad textures of different herbs. They all make a statement in pots, a matching or contrasting coloured group of which looks terrific as a purely ornamental feature.



ICE-CREAM TINS

Otherwise destined for the bin, these old cans make a pretty feature when painted in ice-cream colours and planted up with seasonal flowers. These are Winter aconites or *Eranthis hiemalis*, woodland perennials that need an icy-cold winter. Polyanthus or Primulas would work as well or try Ranunculus, Anemones or other low-growing flowers. The tins won't last much more than a season but you're bound to have a regular supply coming in with your shopping.



SEDUM 'POND'

Here's a fun idea seen at the Chelsea Flower Show. You'd be forgiven for imagining this charming corner of the garden contained a water feature, but closer analysis shows this is a *trompe l'oeil* planting. The blue tub is filled with *Sedum acre* 'Gold Mound', a vivid-lime succulent ground cover and Rhubarb, which appears to extend from the 'water' as lotus leaves do. Alongside a collection of terracotta pots, it creates a colourful focus.

GROW SCREEN

Hide the bins and the compost heap behind a screen of big-square lattice and you can use it to support climbing vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, broad beans or peas. As long as the planted side gets plenty of sun, you'll soon have a solid wall of productive greenery and instead of trampling on the garden to tie-in the growing stems, you can attach them from the other side.



Tree fern Avenue

Create a shady avenue of Australian natives, which form a strong architectural presence along a path. Tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) form a natural canopy overhead as their gently arching fronds intermingle. They can grow up to 15m high with a frond span of 6m, so take that in to account when planting out. Tree ferns are hardy: they like well-drained but moist soil and lots of organic matter.



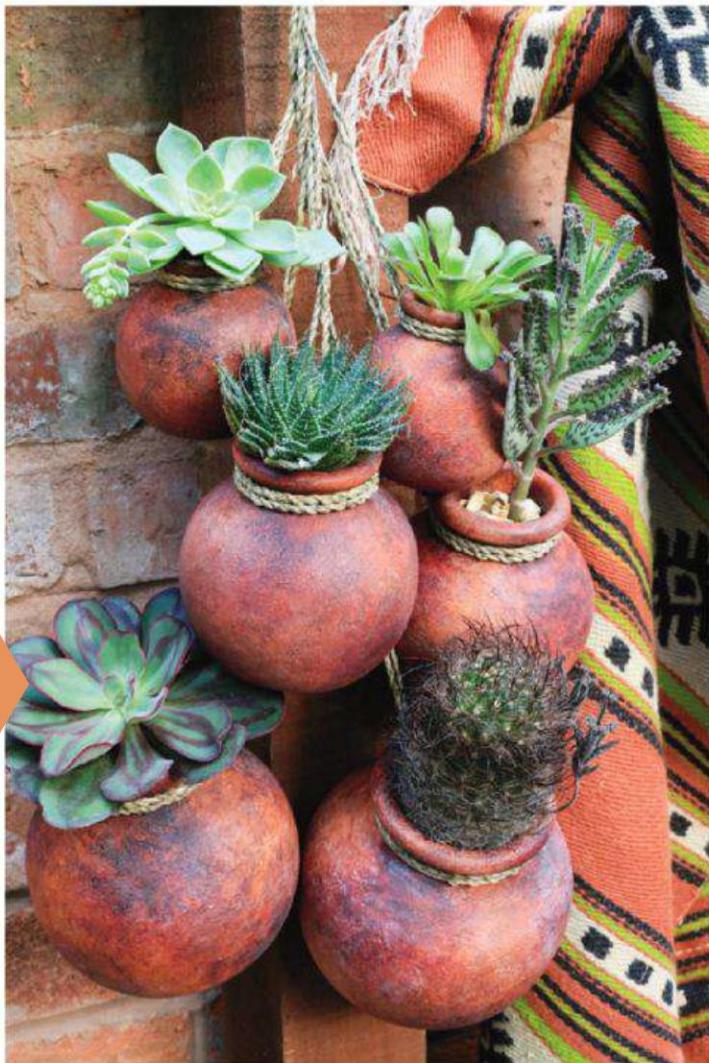
GAP Photos/Lynn Keddie

CRACK UP

Soften the hard landscaping of a masonry or stone wall with an assortment of low-growing or cascading plants that are quite happy with a cool cramped root run; just make sure there is a little soil around the roots as you push them in. Succulents like Echeveria or Alyssum and Seaside daisy all do well. If the wall is shady you can try different types of moss too. It's best to keep your selection limited so the wall doesn't look too busy.

Down Mexico way

Here's a way to make an interesting and unusual feature from pots of the same shape but in different sizes. Any pots with necks or flared rims are suitable and though succulents, as shown, are good choices in plants, anything compact or with a pendulous habit, such as *Dichondra 'Silver Falls'*, will do.



GAP Photos/Graham Strong



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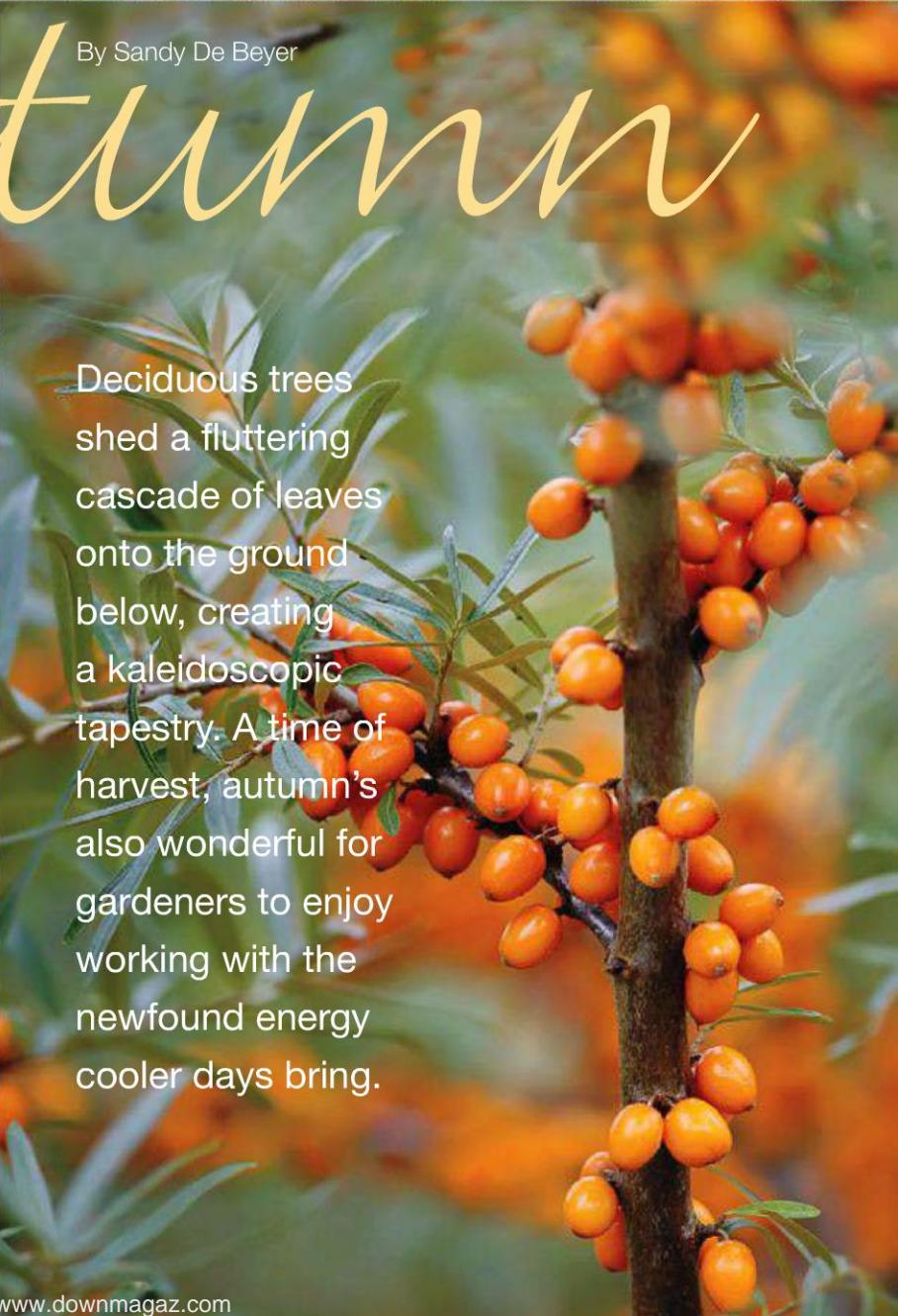
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Autumn

By Sandy De Beyer

Deciduous trees shed a fluttering cascade of leaves onto the ground below, creating a kaleidoscopic tapestry. A time of harvest, autumn's also wonderful for gardeners to enjoy working with the newfound energy cooler days bring.





All images by Photolibrary

Enjoy the visual richness of autumn's cloak



Autumn's the season when the rhythm of life in the garden is most obvious as plants slowly shut down for a winter rest. The temperature and humidity levels have dropped, but there's still warmth in the soil. It's the perfect time to tidy up after summer and get ready for the coming spring.

Nature works

Gather all those fallen leaves and recycle them in your compost bin. For faster breakdown, throw the leaves on the lawn and run over them with the mower to chop them into smaller pieces. Put nature to work for you in another way: if you have paths that grow moss and get slippery, leave the dropped leaves on the path. Next spring, sweep them up and your paths will be clean.

Autumn's the time to collect seeds in the form of berries, nuts, fruit or cones. Birds, animals and the wind help disperse seeds to promising ground far from the parent plant and you can help too.

Plant and pick

Get busy in the vegie patch planting and harvesting. Pick pumpkins when stems turn brown, protect your figs with nets, pick citrus and fruit, grapes, rhubarb and melons. Plant out Asian greens, broccoli, cabbage, English spinach, garlic, leeks, lettuce, onions, peas, radish, rocket, shallots, spinach, swedes and turnips.

Rustling crunchy leaves are

Photolibrary



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nature's gift for your compost



“Autumn is a second spring when



Photolibrary

After a rainy summer when days turn cool, dry and sunny with nights around 4°C, trees make a lot of anthocyanins, pigments that create red and purple hues in leaves. The breakdown of green chlorophyll unmasks orange pigments (carotenoids) and yellow ones, known as xanthophylls.

Maple magic

An autumn with cloudy days and warm nights brings drab colors and an early frost quickly ends an autumn display. On a more positive note, if you love the idea of the change of seasons in a garden you should seriously look at the Japanese maple; it's one of the best deciduous trees for colour. This one has had ideal conditions. Look at page 106 of this issue for more information on these stunners. Consider planting a variety of different deciduous plants in your garden to create a riotous and long autumnal display.

The hue and cry

What are some of the best deciduous trees to produce autumn colour?

- Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) grow well in Sydney, Perth, mountain regions and Tasmania with spectacular foliage. Many maples are suitable for container cultivation.
- Liquidambers (try *Liquidambar styraciflua*) turn yellow, orange, burgundy and red and can grow up to 20m tall.
- Chinese Tallow Wood (*Sapium sebiferum*) is one of the few trees to create great colour in warmer areas and grows 8m-10m high.

every leaf becomes a flower”

Albert Camus, French writer



Photolibrary

- Claret Ash (*Fraxinus 'Raywood'*) grows 10m-15m tall and has a broad spreading habit. Glossy dark leaves turn reddish-purple.
- Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a good for large gardens. It slowly grows up to 11m tall with a 6m spread. Leaves turn yellowish-apricot through to bright scarlet.
- The Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) or Maidenhair grows to 25m and leaves turn pure yellow.
- Crepe Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia Indica*) are the perfect small trees for suburban gardens. Their frilly flowers last for weeks and leaves colour to yellow, orange and scarlet.

► **The dewy webs of garden spiders have a visual fragility that belies their strength. A single strand of silk is 10 times stronger than a steel thread of the same weight and its chemical composition is influencing new fibres for bullet-proof vests and artificial tendons.**

The forgotten never die

Take the time to observe what's going on in your magical, mostly hidden, garden world. You'll find there's one place in the garden where autumn changes rarely occur: on the ground. The covering of fallen leaves allows conditions to remain similar throughout the year. Like the set of a B-grade horror movie, it's always damp, dark and cool just beneath this insulating blanket. Slugs, snails, millipedes and spiders survive by eating leaves or each other. In cooler months, their numbers may be reduced, but they're still there.



Just falling leaves? No, enjoy

Replicate cooler climate leaf colours in a floral display. Many flowers that bloom at this time of year will supply your garden with bright warm tones.

Heady stuff

The bold Gerbera is a perennial with a long vase life and comes in a variety of colours. The capitulum or head of a Gerbera looks like one flower but is actually a cluster of many individual flowers. For more showy colour, also consider planting Calliandra, Crucifix orchids, Bush daisies, *Ixora* 'Prince of Orange', Odontonema, Mexican firespike, Tibouchina and Grevilleas.

Autumn is the perfect time for planting and transplanting. Growth is slowing, but plants can still produce new roots and get them established before winter, giving them a head start for spring. Don't fertilise new perennials, woody plants or evergreens when planting as it encourages foliage growth that can be burnt in winter frosts.

Divide and conquer

Divide plants such as Day lilies, Brunnera, Iris, Hostas, Primrose and Geraniums. To minimise stress, divide them on a cool cloudy day and replant immediately. Each division needs some roots and at least one bud. Add well-rotted compost as a soil improver.

GAP Photos/Friederich Strauss



the flowers and planting weather



Photography by Chris L Jones



The tropic of Clovelly

Peter McCarthy's Sydney garden brilliantly evokes the tropical north Queensland gardens of his childhood.

The secret is blending skillful gardening with a touch of fantasy.

By Roger Mann

Above: The upper terrace appears to be the edge of a deep verdant ravine of tropical foliage.

Left: The taller Alexandra palms grow in Peter's lower garden, while the shorter Kentias (*Howea fosteriana*) are in the garden next door.

Nostalgia often plays a big role in gardening, and when Peter McCarthy speaks of his desire to surround himself with the plants he loved as a child many of us will nod in fellow-feeling. But Peter grew up in Rockhampton, and north Queensland doesn't transpose all that easily to the beachside suburb of Sydney where he and his partner now live.

Their property, which they have owned for about six years, is set well back from the beach and enjoys the shelter of high ground, so doesn't suffer from the salty wind that makes seaside gardening so difficult everywhere. Yet the sea is still close enough to moderate the extremes of the local climate.

Multi-level maison

The block is long and narrow and steep enough that the single storey semi-detached house you meet when you open the front gate turns out to be three storeys high at the back, with

guest accommodation on the lowest level and master bedroom and bath on the top floor. The front door opens onto the middle floor, containing the living area and kitchen, so a visitor's first view of the garden below is from the dining room balcony.

The back yard originally sloped down to a brick-paved level space at the bottom, with three Alexandra palms (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*) along the back boundary but no other planting of significance. It's a surprisingly private spot, and Peter decided at once that this was to be the core of his new garden. Levelling and paving the area outside the guest-rooms' French doors would create a second terrace, with a planted bank and steps linking the two.

Recycled stone

The back garden had yielded a quantity of large roughly-dressed sandstone blocks from an old retaining wall, and Peter "got out his trusty angle



grinder and stone chisel" to reduce them to sizes suitable for building garden steps and low walls to form the bank into tiers of planting beds. But with more stone than needed, lugging it up the side path to the street for disposal was not exactly his idea of fun.

Moreover, the tall narrow façade of the house seemed to loom alarmingly over you when looking up from the lower garden. Something tall but not too bulky was needed in the foreground. Peter decided to use the remaining stone to build two square stone pillars on either side of the steps and adorn them with cascading plants. It was an inspiration to stagger them – one set low down and the other higher up – but it was sheer genius to make them hollow and leave a few gaps in the sides so they could be planted like huge strawberry pots.

A sense of scale

Remaining faithful to his tropical theme, Peter has resisted planting those old Sydney-garden tropical standbys, Hibiscus and Bougainvillea. "Too gaudy and out of scale for a small garden like this one," he says.

The only trees he has planted are three Angel's trumpets (*Brugmansia* hybrids) which bear their scented white or yellow flowers all summer long. Peter prunes these quite hard every winter to keep them from getting too large. (Avoid *Brugmansias* where there are small children; they are very poisonous.)

To form the skyline in the garden, he relies on the palms that were already there – both his own Alexandras and the borrowed scenery of his next-door neighbour's fine group of Kentias (*Howea forsteriana*).

Above: A combination of sandstone towers and tall, clumping plants including variegated Cannas and Gingers add a vertical element to the foreground, reducing the visual dominance of the house behind.

Right: The higher stone planter features the Bromeliad *Neoregelia carolinae*, an Aloe, *Colocasia 'Black Magic'* and the curious, saw-toothed cactus *Cryptocereus anthonyanus*.

A dense palette rich in colour and texture creates the signature tropical ambience of this multi-level garden.





Xanthosoma maffafa 'Aurea' creates a foil to miniature Bamboo.



Peter brings these *Caladium bicolor* tubers inside for the winter and replants them in spring.



The Pagoda tree or *Clerodendrum speciosissimum* flowers all summer.



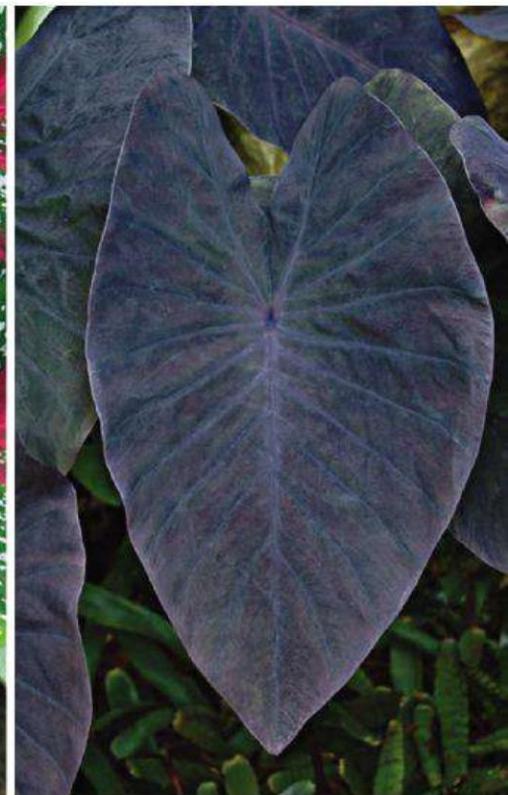
The fabulous *Globba winitti* 'Mauve Dancing Girl' go dormant in winter.



Caladium bicolor are either fancy (heart-shaped) or lance leaf (arrow-shaped).



Shrimp plant, squirrel's tail or *Justicia betonica* is in the Acanthaceae family.



spectacular blooms

With no stems, *Caladium bicolor* leaves are borne on petioles that rise from the tuber.

There are over 1000 cultivars of *Caladium bicolor* or elephant's ear.

The black Taro, *Colocasia esculenta* 'Black Magic', stays outside all winter.



The exquisite *Heliconia rostrata* does best in a sheltered spot with partial shade.

Alocasia macrorrhiza 'Alba Variegata' lends an air of military camouflage to the garden.

The blooms of *Brugmansia suaveolens* (syn *Datura suaveolens*) are highly toxic.

*Peter brings the tubers
of his favourite pink
and green Caladiums
indoors for the winter.
You can do this by
drying them out for
a few weeks after
removing them from
the ground, packing
them in dry peat moss
and storing them in
a dark cool place.*

'Tropical herbaceous plants'
The bulk of Peter's plantings, apart from a couple of small shrubs, are tropical perennials. They're chiefly Alpinias, Bromeliads, a broad assortment of closely-related plants with the common name elephant's ears, Caladiums, Colocasias and Heliconias. These die down for the winter in Sydney's climate (Peter laughingly refers to them as tropical herbaceous perennials), as does *Amorphophallus bulbifer*, which he grows solely for its spectacular leaves. "I hate the flowers," he says. "They smell funny and look as though they're made of plastic!" Except for Peter's favourite pink and green Caladiums, the plants can all stay in the ground during winter, and it is then the Bromeliads come into their own, with company including the green and pink *Hippeastrum papilio* and spring-blooming *Heliconia 'Red Christmas'*.

We usually see Bromeliads as specimen pot plants, but Peter

not only grows them in his tower planters, he uses them as ground cover, too. Very useful they are too. Many of them – especially the Neoregelias, Porteas and the smaller Vrieseas – expand quickly into clumps and flourish even at the base of the greedy-rooted palms. None of them are rare or expensive varieties; rather, they epitomise what Peter calls his 'grandma-friendly plants' – the tough, easy-going ones that even his non-gardening relatives can grow.

Tending the soil

With the warm weather, herbaceous plants return, growing so fast and luxuriantly that one is tempted to ask whether Peter is blessed with some kind of magic soil. No, says he; it's just the ordinary grey sandy stuff you find near the beach, to which he gives a mulch of poultry manure (Dynamic Lifter or a similar brand) in spring and regular dressings of slow-release fertiliser through the growing season. Of course like all sandy soils it drains very fast, which makes frequent watering a must – Peter says he sometimes feels he's practising hydroponics out of doors!

A touch of fantasy

By Christmas the garden is in full glory and remains that way until the end of April. Descend the steps to the lower garden then, and you'll find yourself in complete seclusion; even the house is invisible. As you sit in the shade, cool drink in hand, imagination easily transforms the stone walls and pillars into the ruins of some remote temple in the jungle, where a tiger might come prowling by at any moment.

Of course he'll prove to be just one of the neighbourhood cats, and it's only a fantasy jungle like the ones in old Hollywood movies; but it's the touch of fantasy that lifts this garden out of the ordinary and lends it a special magic.



Acquiring tropical plants

**This is not a garden
filled with hard-to-find
rarities. Peter McCarthy
often brings plants
home from visits to his
family in Queensland,
but most of them
have been bought at
nurseries in Sydney or
by mail order from one
of the growers who
advertise in the pages
of Your Garden.**

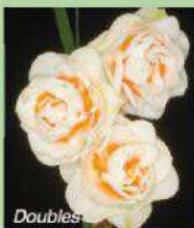
SEE IT FOR YOURSELF

The garden is open for the Australian Open Garden Scheme on the weekend of 12–13 February 2010 from 10am until 4pm. Entry is \$5. Find it at 13 Knox Street, Clovelly, NSW.

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Bulbs

Fire up the garden in spring

By Ally Jackson

Autumn's arrival signifies bulb buying and planting time. There's such a wide variety of bulbs and ways to plant them, go out and let inspiration be your guide. Whether you choose to naturalise them, plant them en masse, dot them through garden beds or in eye-catching pots, your garden will be a show stopper

Naturally occurring

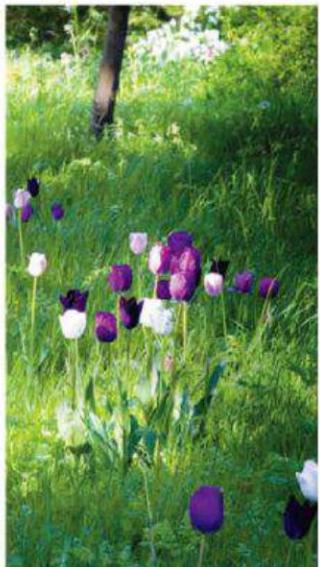
White and purple Tulips randomly bloom under Crab-apple trees, complementing the blossoms above.



En masse

Ranunculus and Anemone form a blanket of rich colour in this eye-catching example of traditional bulb planting.

Naturalised bulbs



Photolibrary

Rather than lord it over nature by controlling growth, sometimes there's no better way than to leave it up to the plants. Unlike some climbers, bulbs are never going to get too out of hand. If you leave them to naturalise, they come and go each year without you having to do much more.

Naturalised around deciduous trees, in the lawn or in a semi-wild corner of your garden, they foreshadow the coming spring by emerging when trees are still bare. For an uncontrived look, follow Edna Walling's example: she threw potatoes over her shoulder and planted where they fell. Find some space in your garden this year and naturalise some bulbs. The effort you put in now will reward you for years to come.

Massed bulbs

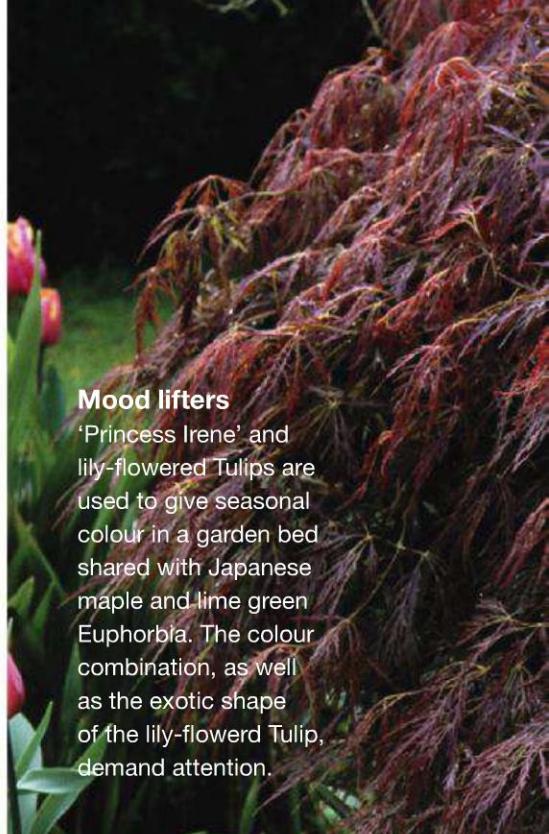
Mention massed bulbs and many people think of fields of Tulips in Holland, with a backdrop of an iconic windmill. And rightly so – the traditional way of displaying their exquisite beauty is by filling fields with one variety. The Aussie backyard is far from field-sized nowadays, but that doesn't mean this planting style is out. And, don't feel limited to tulips either. By selecting any type of bulb, either in a single colour or a cheerful mix, and planting them across as big an area as possible, you can create a view worthy of the Dutch masters and enjoy the colour saturation and physical form of a mass of beautiful flowers. Ranunculus or Anenomes are a great choice because they're readily available and cheap to buy.



Photolibrary

Bulbs in the garden

The beauty of growing bulbs among more permanent shrubs and perennials is their flash-in-the-pan, great-while-they're-here nature, like that favourite friend eking out an existence in an exotic country who drops by annually to remind you how exciting life is. When they turn up, they brighten your mood and make you see the beauty in life, the visit washing over you and warming your heart until the next year. When they're in bloom, spring bulbs take your eye to a well-known patch and add an alternative dimension, be it colour, height or scent. They compliment the structure and the colours of the always-there plants but make you look at them differently. When they're gone, their memory inspires you to experiment with other seasonal flowers in the months that follow spring.



Mood lifters

'Princess Irene' and lily-flowered Tulips are used to give seasonal colour in a garden bed shared with Japanese maple and lime green Euphorbia. The colour combination, as well as the exotic shape of the lily-flowered Tulip, demand attention.



Photolibrary





Turning potty

Siberian iris (this page) is planted en masse as a single specimen in this pot. Featuring one species of bulb allows you to revel in the features of the display and the block of colour

makes a bold statement. Hyacinths, Paperwhite jonquils, Polyanthus, Violas and Ivy (opposite page) were grown in separate pots and placed in a rustic basket to create a headily perfumed centre-piece.





Picture Media

Bulbs in pots

The versatility of bulbs grown in pots makes them a moveable feast for the senses. If you plant them now in plastic pots, you can keep them in the wings until they bloom then put them in ornamental colour-coordinated pots for the duration of their show. The most striking combination usually packs bulbs of many species into the one pot, creating a layered effect. Use some scented species to give you the added pleasure of perfume. Bring

PLANTING BULBS

Massed bulbs

Massed plantings knit together as one large visual unit of colour or texture creating instant drama. Space the bulbs evenly in the chosen area, digging them in to their correct depths. After planting, cover over and water. Label them so you know what to expect come flowering.

Bulbs in the garden

Planting bulbs in an established garden allows the bulb foliage to die back without drawing attention to the fact. Place the bulbs in odd-numbered clumps, dispersed through the garden with the tallest at the back. A handy way to find the bulbs at the end of the growing season is to place them in plastic baskets and bury the entire basket – you'll never lose a bulb again!

Potted bulbs

Make sure you really pack a pot full of bulbs. Also consider layering different bulb species on top of one another to elongate the display, always planting them to their correct depth. They are generally a one-hit wonder when planted in pots, so lift them following the end of their cycle, store and plant in the garden the following autumn. When selecting pots, depth is important – at least 12cm is required and drainage holes should be adequate. Use the best potting mix you can buy.

Bulbs in brief

- Bulbs contain the inner workings of the entire plant so select those that are firm to the touch. They should be fleshy, not withered, mouldy or dried out.
- If you want your bulbs to flower at the same time, make sure they're a uniform size. The old axiom of 'bigger is better' is definitely applicable in the case of bulbs.
- If your winters are mild, give bulbs a 6–8 week stint in the fridge crisper before you plant them in May. This activates their growing cycle.

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the nuts and bolts of it

- If you want to grow tulips in mild climates, treat them as annuals. They won't perform again.
- Apply fertiliser as flowers are fading.
- All bulbs need moisture while they're growing in winter and must be allowed to dry out when they're dormant in summer.
- Aside from Ranunculus, which go in claws down, the pointy end should always be head up.



Naturalised bulbs in lawn

The aim is to create a natural informal look which is permanent, easy to maintain, and gets better with age.

- Cut out an area of turf and roll it back.
- Prepare the area underneath by digging out the soil to the correct planting depth of the bulbs.
- Randomly position the bulbs, backfill with the crumbled excavated soil, sprinkle a ration of fertiliser on top and water in well.
- Replace the lawn flap.
- Mow until you see the green tips of the bulbs appear. After that, mow around bulbs until the foliage has yellowed off in late spring.

GAP Photos/BBC Magazines

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5 plant flowerbed

Flowers are the gardener's paint pots and one of the most exciting and rewarding projects you can do is to create a bed of mixed flowers. The art is combining plants of various shapes, sizes and colours into a single mass that looks as good as an arrangement as it does as a colour palette. That's a skill we don't all possess, so we asked two of our most successful production nurseries to make it easy for you. We asked them to suggest five plants that would do well and look terrific together in an oval-shaped island garden bed 4.5m long and 2.75m wide. The plants all had to like full sun, be easy to grow and care for and bloom for long periods.

All you have to do is create the bed and follow the planting plan.

Autumn's the ideal time to get the plants in and growing and you can expect your first flowers in spring. The plants are spaced to allow room for them to grow to their full sizes, which means there'll be bare ground between each. You can either just mulch over that with lucerne hay, sugar cane mulch or your preferred organic matter or fill the spaces with annual flowers so the whole bed is colourful and full in the first spring. Annual flowers only live for a few months and can be removed in stages to make room for the recommended plants as they grow. We've included a list of annuals you could use for spring bloom and a list of replacements for summer bloom.

PLAN 1 Laugh at heat & dryness

All the plants are tough and, once established, able to tolerate summer dry spells as well as the frosts often experienced in inland areas. If you plant them in autumn and water them regularly right through until October, they should be well established for their first summer. After that, the odd, deep soaking when the rain stays away is all they need.



1 *Salvia nemorosa* 'Kate Glenn'

Early blooming with spectacular spikes of purple and violet flowers, 'Kate Glenn' is a perennial that forms a 60cm-wide clump about 70cm tall.

2 *Hummingbird mint* (*Agastache* 'Sweet Lili')

From summer to winter, 'Sweet Lili' produces spikes of orange-pink flowers above the foliage. It grows 120cm tall and about half as wide.

3 *Euphorbia* 'Cotpon Ash'

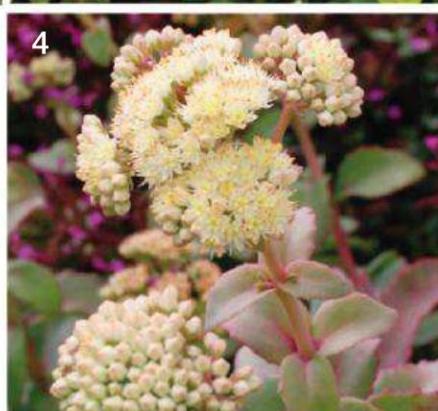
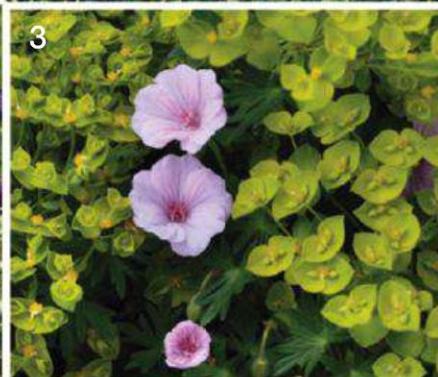
Forms a 60cm x 60cm mound of fine-textured, blue-grey leaves topped with clusters of lime green flowers in late spring and summer.

4 *Sedum* 'Beth Chatto's Form'

The purple-flushed, blue-grey leaves are reason enough to grow it but you'll also love the white summer blooms that turn bronze in autumn.

5 *Shrubby statice* (*Limonium peregrinum*)

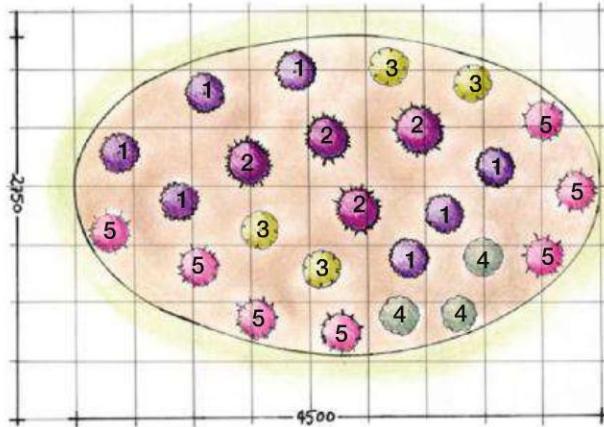
A rounded, evergreen about 60cm x 60cm, topped with flattened clusters of pink flowers that fade to white. Flowers spring and summer.



Grow an easy-care, 5-plant flowerbed by following one of our simple plans. You'll get great results this year, even better next year and beyond.

The planting plan

From Victoria's Lambley Nursery comes this plan for southern Australia and inland areas where summer rainfall and humidity is low. If you don't want an oval bed, these plants could be arranged in any shape as long as its dimensions are suitable for their ultimate spread. All plants are sun lovers. On the planting plan, one square equals 50 x 50cm.



Where to get them

All plants in this plan are available by mail-order or from Lambley Nursery, 'Burnside', Lesters Road, Ascot, Victoria 3364. Send email orders to orders@lambley.com.au or phone the nursery on (03) 5343 4303. Plants cannot be sent to Western Australia.

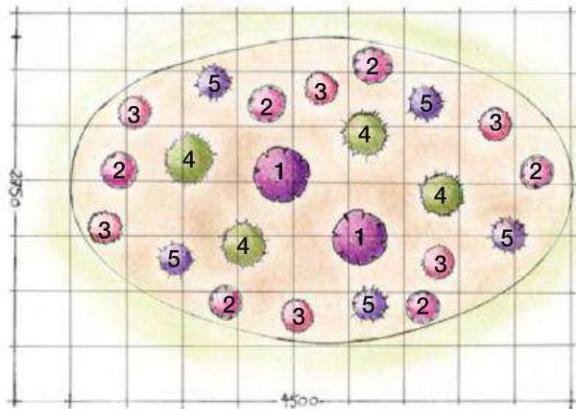
The plants

1 *Salvia 'Kate Glenn'* x 7. **2** *Agastache 'Sweet Lili'* x 4. **3** *Euphorbia 'Copton Ash'* x 4. **4** *Sedum 'Beth Chatto's Form'* x 3. **5** *Limonium peregrinum* x 7



PLAN 2 Mostly native

Ramm Botanicals, on the New South Wales Central Coast, is a major plant producer. It's one of the most important breeders of Australian plants and has done a lot to improve their look and performance. This plan uses four of their showiest natives, plus one of their most popular African daisies, and is suitable for almost all the country except the tropics. Once established, the selection is dryness-tolerant and withstands moderate frosts, at least.



Where to get them

All plants featured in this plan are widely available at local nurseries.

The plants

1 *Alyogyne 'West Coast Gem'* x 2. 2 *Arctotis 'Safari Sunset'* x 6. 3 *Pimelea 'Pink Solitaire'* x 6. 4 *Ozothamnus 'Radiance'* x 4. 5 *Scaevola 'Aussie Crawl'* x 5



Natives are terrific choices for the water-wise



1

1 Native hibiscus (*Alyogyne 'West Coast Gem'*) Blooms from August to Xmas and demands little more than a moderate pruning all over straight after bloom. That keeps it to 2m or less.

2 African daisy

(*Arctotis 'Safari Sunset'*) Grey-leaf groundcover smothered with deep red daisies from July to spring. Spreads 1m across. Yellow and orange forms also available.

3 Rice flower (*Pimelea 'Pink Solitaire'*)

A neat, rounded shrub usually wider than it is tall. Flowers are produced densely from late winter until Xmas at least. About 1m tall.

4 Sago flower (*Ozothamnus 'Radiance'*)

Almost always in bloom, most abundantly in spring and early summer, sago flower grows as an open, branching shrub up to 2m tall.

5 Fan flower (*Scaevola 'Aussie Crawl'*)

This develops into a mounding groundcover up to 2m across. Deep blue flowers cover its stems through spring and summer.

Using mostly evergreen shrubs, this plan offers a permanent foundation that can be changed every few years by replacing the two ground-covering perennials used with either annual flowers or different perennials.



2



3



4



5

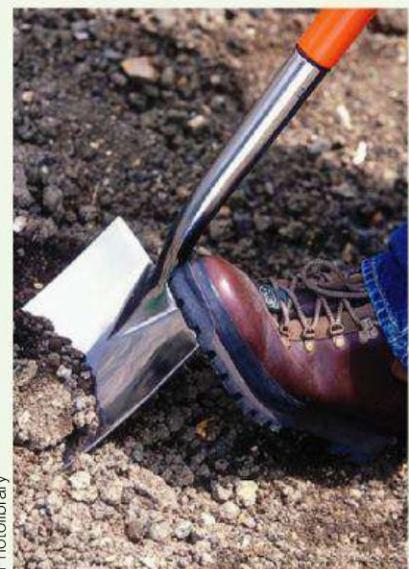
Fill-in flowers

Annual flowers are perfect for filling the bare patches between young plants. They grow fast, flower for ages, then die. By then, the permanent plants will have spread so your next planting of fill-in flowers needs to fill a smaller space. In a year or so you'll probably only need to fill the odd patch.

You can buy annuals as seedlings in punnets of 6-8 or start them more cheaply from seed. Annuals planted in autumn bloom in late winter or spring. When they've finished, replace them with another batch of different annuals that flower in late spring and summer.

Choose annuals which flower in colours that go with those of the permanent plants. Some good choices for autumn include Pansies in blue, purple or pink shades, pink or white Primula, white Alyssum, blue Cornflower and blue Lobelia. For summer consider Petunias, Calibrachoa and Ageratum.

How to make this 5 plant flowerbed bed



Photolibrary

Put a sharp edge on your spade with a bench or angle grinder or metal file.

Early upkeep

Keeping the plants lightly moist is the most important job after planting. It takes a lot of water to moisten dry soil down to where the roots are, but once the soil is moist you should only need to water the new bed once or twice a week if it doesn't rain. After watering, wait an hour then dig down into the soil to check for moistness at root depth. If it's still dry, apply more water. As winter draws in, you'll find you have to water less but be aware that windy weather will dry the soil fast.

Planting out

Stand plants in their pots on the bed in the positions indicated on the plan. Keep the ultimate spread of the plants in mind and space them accordingly. If you want to be more accurate about this, lay a grid of string lines over the bed at 50cm intervals. Each square will be half a square metre and you'll have a better idea of where to put the plants.

Getting started

Mark the points of maximum length and breadth on the lawn. Use a length of rope or hose to establish the outer edges of the oval. For a bed this size, you'll need 12m. When you're happy with its shape, use marking paint or flour to transfer the outline onto the grass.

Put a sharp edge on the spade and dig out the grass. If the grass is good quality you can use it to either expand the area of grass elsewhere or to fix bare patches.

Dig over the cleared site, breaking up clods as you work so that the soil ends up being fine and crumbly.

Improve soil fertility by spreading six bags of manure onto it and sprinkling it with controlled-release fertiliser. Work these into the soil then rake smooth and level.

Useful product

Seasol Planting Gel acts like a water and nutrient reservoir right under the roots of new plantings. The product absorbs water then slowly releases it as needed by the plant, along with a ration of seaweed-based nutrient. It helps young plants establish a strong root system and is good insurance against drying out if you forget to water.

Annual flowerbed maintenance



ABOVE: Divide perennials in winter.
BELOW: Shear faded flowers.



Photolibrary

The plants in these plans are a mixture of perennials and shrubs. Perennials don't develop woody stems or trunks but shrubs do.

With the perennials, all you need do is cut off the remains of the finished flowers each year and, once every few years when the plants are beginning to outgrow their allotted spaces, dig them up, cut or pull them apart into smaller sections and replant some of those sections in the original space. Plant the rest elsewhere, give them away or discard them. Do this job in winter.

With shrubs, just prune them all over straight after blooming. The amount to take off depends on how fast and open they have been growing. The bigger and more rangy, the more you can cut but don't cut into bare stems. Only cut into leafy wood, making sure there are some leaves left. In the early days, it's a good idea to snip out the growing tips from each branch as this forces side shoots to develop, making the plant bushier and more compact.

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The open room



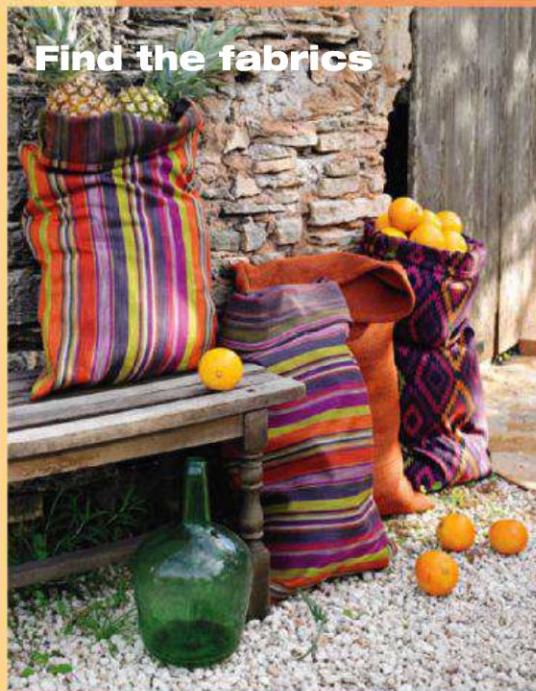
Spiced up

By Sandy de Beyer

The trend to let interior spaces flow effortlessly to the garden and to give those spaces as much love and attention as interiors is here to stay.

Eating out, undercover

Your home's entertaining areas can be greatly increased by erecting a covered 'open' room. If it's built generously enough to shelter you from wind-driven rain and slanting sun, you can fit it out with more comfortable and stylish interior furniture and fabrics. The Jab Four Seasons range of fabrics from Seneca is pictured at left as a tablecloth and chairs upholstered in red and orange tones married with raspberry, mustard, aubergine and sage to create an exotic mood inspired by the rich indigenous weaving traditions of Latin America. See below for details.



Find the fabrics

From left to right, above: the stripes are Bogota; Picos is the plain fabric; the diamond pattern is Callao. Left: The sheer linen with diamond shapes hanging outside is Caracas. All Jab Four Seasons Vol. 8 from \$273/m at Seneca. Call (03) 9529 2788 or visit senecatextiles.com.

All-weather alternatives

For areas exposed to the elements, these hard-wearing, outdoor upholstery fabrics from Sunbrella stay strong and vibrant under exposure to intense sunlight and cleaning with bleach. They resist stains and fading and the stripes, whether used horizontally or vertically, add pizzazz.

The Sunbrella outdoor fabrics below are 137cm wide and \$115 per metre.



The details, left to right:
Bravada Limelite, repeat 17.5cm

Castanet Beach, repeat 22.5cm

Bravada Salsa, repeat 17.5cm

Dolce Mango, repeat 22.6cm

For more information about fabrics and to find a stockist near you, call (02) 9316 1300 or visit goodearlandbailey.com.au.

Spice it up with hues of paprika, turmeric, cinnamon and ginger

Flowers with super powers

All these 100% solution dyed acrylic floral fabrics are suitable for indoors or out. They are fade, water and stain resistant and this protection is not just coated on; it's woven into every fibre. They also have anti-microbial properties that resist mould and mildew. All 137cm wide, they're available from Fab Outdoor Fabrics. **See more styles online at faboutdoorfabrics.com.au.**



Sienna Blooms, \$44/m



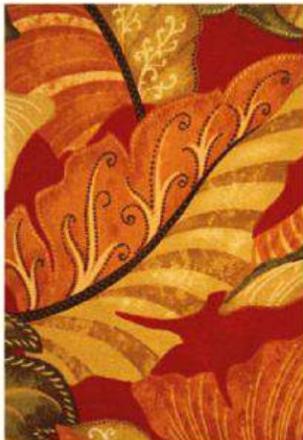
Hip Flowers, \$45/m



Divine Floral Cream, \$45/m



Surf Leaf, \$42/m



Tropix Sunburnt, \$42/m



Terrazzo Mosaic, \$49/m



Eyecatching cushions

Left to right, above: Antique Beige canvas, \$38/m; Terrazzo Brick, \$49/m, from faboutdoorfabrics.com.au; Arabesque 7601 in Pimento, from mokumtextiles.com.

Modern courtyard

In the courtyard pictured right, the neutral-toned walls, deck and furniture are injected with excitement by splashes of salmon and a striking Moroccan-inspired geometric pattern. Walls are painted in Brown Bark from Taubmans' Endure Exterior range. Its hardy acrylic formulation makes dirt less likely to stick and surfaces easier to clean. \$63.90 buys 4 litres at Bunnings, Taubmans Trade Centres and Bristol Decorator Centres. To find a Taubmans stockist near you, call 131 686.

Natural neutrals, never plain

Left to right, below: Choc, Cinnamon linen, Orange canvas, Cherry, Saffron, Gold, Sage & Vanilla linens from Fab Outdoor Fabrics. Linen: \$48/m. Canvas: \$45/m.





Add zest to a neutral palette with touches of delicious colour and bold patterns

Autumn garden colours

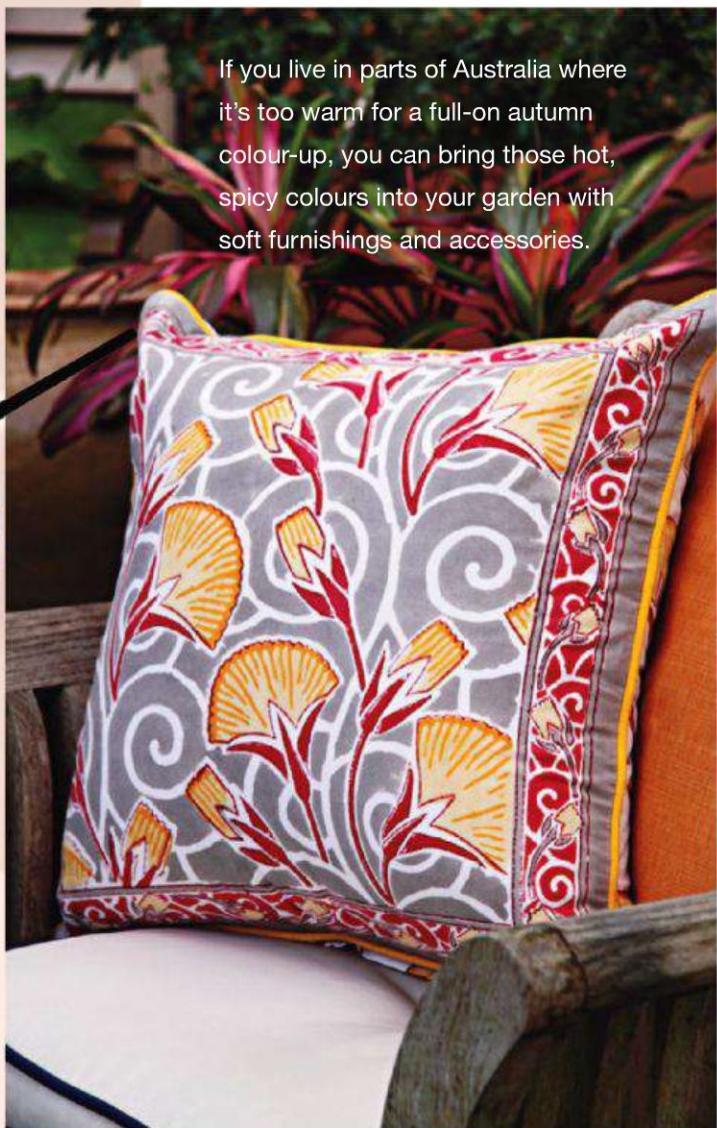
Paint comes in all the warm shades of autumn so it's easy to add a splash of colour to a wall or furniture to bring it alive. Buy sample pots like the ones below from Murobond, \$9 each, and let your inner artist shine on through. Find the right paint for your surface at Murobond paints at murobond.com.au.



Freshen the place up with foliage

Many foliage plants show a spice-coloured cloak all year round. The inspiration for this setting came from the rich warm colours of Coleus, but Cordylines, Flax, Crotons, Rhoeo and Bromeliads all add colour to a garden more permanently than any flowering plant.

If you live in parts of Australia where it's too warm for a full-on autumn colour-up, you can bring those hot, spicy colours into your garden with soft furnishings and accessories.



Above: Scatter cushions not only make hard outdoor furniture more comfortable, they also allow you to add personality to the area. Look in homewares stores or online for a pattern that makes your heart beat. Find these Saffron Spice cushions, \$37.95 each, and plain Org napkins in Danube, \$3.95 each, that we made into cushion covers at Alfresco Emporium. Call (02) 9972 9999 or visit alfrescoemporium.com.au.

Paint the patio

Discover the decorator within by using paint: it's cheap and cheerful and you can easily change colours. The wall, pictured right, is painted with Paprika from Murobond's low-sheen Pure range. It creates a Mediterranean look and is a great complement to any foliage.

Envelope yourself in the rich colours of a permanent autumn

Aperitifs on the terrace?





Back to school



An idyll in progress, the Musk Vale school is evolving room by room into a formal yet relaxed rustic retreat.

Words and Photographs by Marcelle Nankervis

LEFT: The summer house offers a place in the garden to entertain and unwind.
CENTRE: Hops – a deciduous vine you can grow on a pergola – provides shade in summer and these glorious female

flower clusters, or strobiles, used in the making of beer, throughout autumn. The vine needs a cold winter.
RIGHT: The labyrinth of garden rooms are linked with walkways and gates.





TOP LEFT: A hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) hedge celebrates autumn and provides a graphic screen between 2 garden rooms.

BOTTOM LEFT: The entrance to Musk Farm sets the tone for the garden and home within.

INSET: Before Stuart and Michael gave it a new lease on life, the schoolhouse stood without any attention for over 6 years.

RIGHT: Eschewing floral colour, clipped box (*Buxus sempervirens*) balls create an elegant evergreen entrance to the house.

Musk Farm near Daylesford in Victoria has undergone an amazing transformation: from abandoned school ground, to a property of grand proportions.

When interior designers Stuart Rattle and Michael O'Neill purchased the disused Musk Vale schoolhouse in 1998, they thought that they would plant a couple of garden beds, buy a few sheep to keep the grass low and use it as a weekend getaway a couple of times a month. That idea quickly dissipated and the result is an amazing garden that has become the object of their gardening passion for this rural property.

Collectively inspired

Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, Stuart and Michael have also drawn on many other influences to create the 1.2 hectares of established gardens that surround their renovated schoolhouse. From the bright blue garden seats reminiscent of Sir Roy Strong's Laskett gardens to the signature topiary spheres of their close friend and landscape designer Paul Bangay, there are reflections of other famous designers' work throughout the grounds as well. Yet the design is undoubtedly theirs.

Their first attempt at a garden of this size, Stuart and Michael admit to making many mistakes; however, this has lead to a deeper understanding of gardening in their climate, to the importance of plant selection and the significance of good soil preparation and maintenance.

Room by room

"We've become ruthless when it comes to plants and their success," says Stuart. "If something is not doing well, you must be brutal – just cut your losses and start again."

Not afraid to relocate plants



This widow's watch and dormer windows afford a view across surrounding fields.



Rose hips form in spring, ripen in summer and show their colour to autumn.

within the garden, Stuart and Michael have also rescued specimens from nearby gardens and inner-city Melbourne, bringing some unlikely plants and a number of stories about their origin to Musk Farm.

With sweeping lawns, rustic woodlands and intricate parterres, Musk Farm's mix of garden rooms and planting combinations all work together because of their relevance to the overall theme of the garden and its empathy to the house.

"The garden rooms are a testament to the evolution of the garden," says Stuart, who admits that they never composed a master plan before planting. "We simply developed the gardens closest to the house first and have moved out from there. We've subsequently changed many of them. Each time we develop a new area, we cut a hole in a hedge and add another room. The rooms not only allow us to expand the garden, but also act as invaluable windbreaks."



Perfectly clipped privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) surrounds the former oval, whose entrance is flanked by Pope urns.



Seasons & good sense

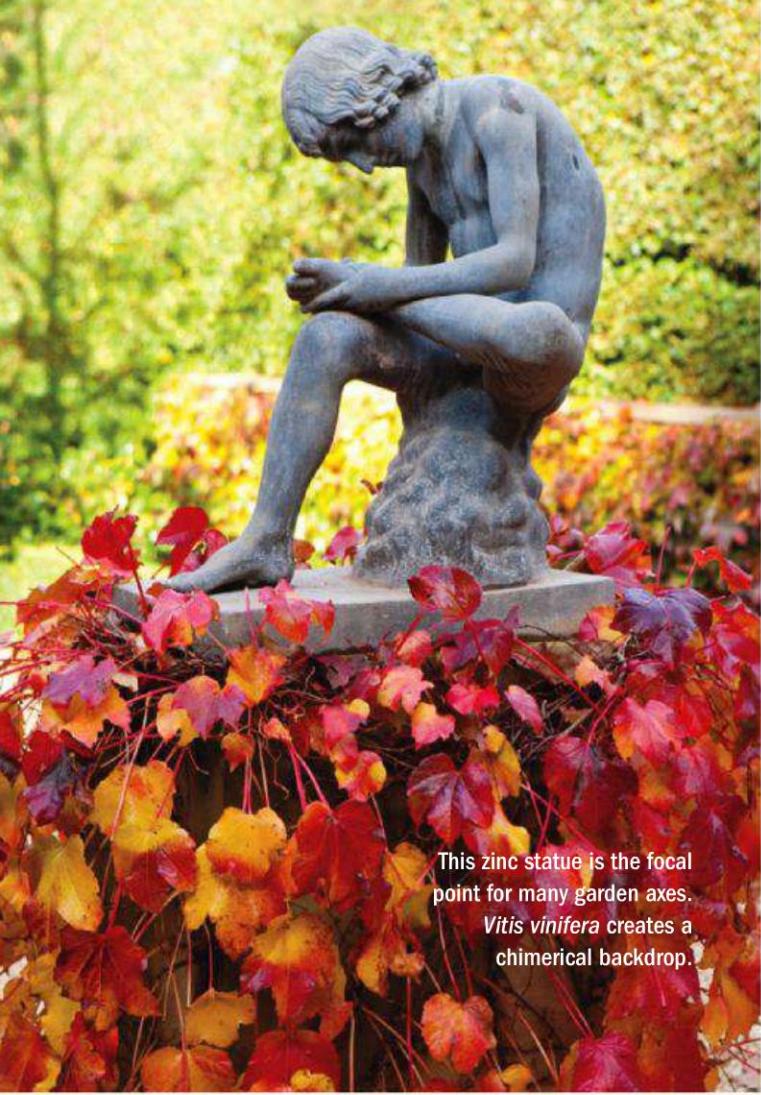
Dedicated plant enthusiasts, Stuart and Michael have sought unique plants for their garden, as well as housing an impressive Snowdrop (*Galanthus*) collection.

“We’re very fortunate to have four distinct seasons here, giving us a wonderful palette to draw from,” adds Stuart. “In spring we enjoy the blossoms, in autumn the hips and berries; summer sees the perennial borders at their peak and in winter the *Galanthus* emerge and the

twiggy silhouettes of the mature trees punctuate the landscape. There is something special about every season which is always changing, even from week to week. We take pleasure in experiencing what each season has to offer and in finding unusual plants for each season.”

Establishing a garden such as this is no mean feat, but doing it during a drought is almost inconceivable.

“We water new plants in and then slowly wean them,” says Stuart. “We have rainwater tanks and a bore so that



This zinc statue is the focal point for many garden axes.
Vitis vinifera creates a chimerical backdrop.



The potting shed was the school's toilet block, but added architectural features now link it aesthetically to other buildings on the site.



The former school oval now resembles an English country common and is a pivotal design element at Musk Farm.



The superb glass-like Viburnum berries show from March to May.

we can water when necessary. But, after 18 months here, we find few plants require extra water. It's been much easier than we first thought."

This could be thanks to the compost they use to enrich the soil or the mulch they religiously barrow around the garden.

Displaying a rare sensitivity to the wider landscape, the owners made a conscious decision to allow the lawns to brown off over summer, pointing out that bright green lawns in the middle of parched farm land would not only be irresponsible but completely artificial.

Gardening *is* relaxing

When asked about maintaining a garden this size, Stuart positively beams. "Maintenance is catharsis for us," he admits. "As interior designers we're inside a lot, so this is our favourite form of relaxation. We agree with Edna Walling, who once said that '*In gardens I love all the things most gardeners abhor*'."

Repurposing many of the original buildings, Stuart and Michael have retained the site's historical integrity while integrating old buildings into a modern plan. The shelter shed and toilet block are now the summer house and potting shed, respectively. Even the school's oval has been morphed into a formal part of the landscape with an enclosing hedge.

With the purchase of the next-door farm, Musk Farm gardens have no spatial end in sight. Who knows where this growing obsession will end? One thing is certain, the former Musk Vale schoolhouse could not be in better hands.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Stuart Rattle Interior Design is located at 411–413 Malvern Rd, South Yarra, Victoria. Musk Farm gardens are periodically open to the public and group bookings can be arranged at (03) 9827 0180.



Adam Woodhams

Make it last

**PRESERVE YOUR OWN FRESH FRUIT AND VEGIES
FOR ENJOYMENT LATER IN THE YEAR.**

BY MARCELLE NANKERVIS

Nothing compares to fruit and vegies harvested from your own garden and what better way to deal with an overabundance of home-grown produce than to preserve, store, pickle or dehydrate it. You'll reduce your trips to the greengrocer and always have good quality produce on hand, no matter what the season.

Fresh fruit and vegies continue to mature after harvest. Correct storage helps to maintain their quality, freshness and flavour. Whether you're storing them for a week or two or up to one year, how you cut and keep your fresh fruit and vegies differs according to the crop. Some can be frozen directly while others need to be blanched first. Some can be air-dried while others will need a couple of days in the oven.

Try these tips and tricks to make the most of your produce.

PRESERVING



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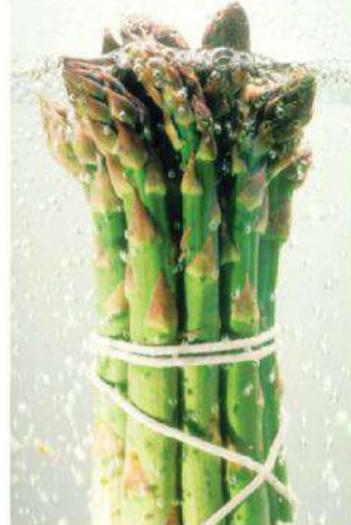
Many types of fruits and vegies can be preserved by bottling them or by turning them into pastes, sauces, jams or jellies. For most of us, bottling is out of the question as we don't have the home

FREEZING

Fruit and vegetables can be stored from three months up to one year in the freezer. Some need to be blanched first, while others can be placed directly into a freezer bag. Whichever method you use, make frozen foods as practical as possible. Cut, chop or dice before freezing to save time later. If possible, freeze on a tray first to prevent them freezing as one solid block before placing in a freezer bag. Take care to remove as much air from this bag as possible to minimise freezer burn.

Blanch first

It's easy to blanch produce before freezing and it can be an important part of preserving their flavour and maintaining maximum freshness. To blanch vegies, boil some water and plunge them in for anything from a few seconds to a minute, depending on their size. Remove and immerse in ice water to stop the cooking process. Leave to drip-dry in a colander before freezing. Fruit may also be blanched prior to dehydrating, but by steam rather than in boiling water. Steam for 3–5 minutes and allow to dry for at least 30 minutes before dehydrating.



Photolibrary

bottling kits that were once very popular. However, we can all make sauces, pastes, jams and jellies, all of which consume large quantities of otherwise wasted produce. And we can all dry or semi-dry tomatoes in our ovens (set at lowest heat, leave door ajar, dry on tray). Processing also lets us use blemished fruits or vegies we wouldn't choose to eat fresh and any that are too ripe for eating. All you need is a good supply of glass jars with well-fitting lids.

Take note

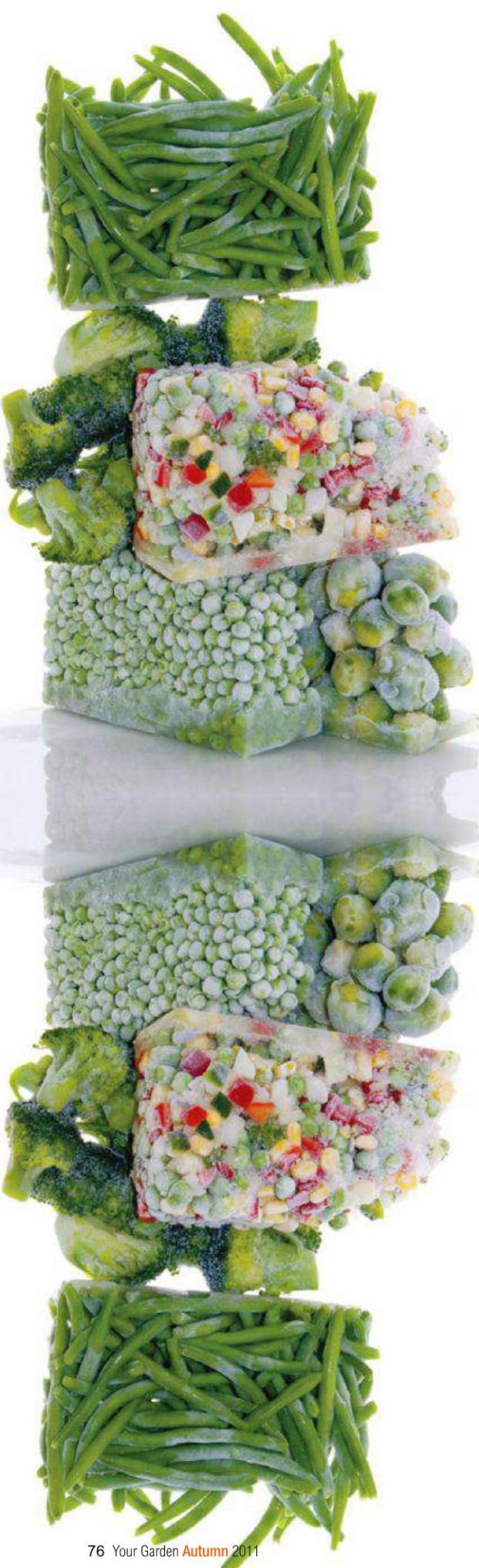
Cleanliness is vital to success and food safety. Sterilise ladles and all bottles and lids in boiling water before the freshly cooked food is poured or ladled in. Seal containers as soon as the steam stops rising from them.

DRYING

Home food dehydrators make removing water from produce easy; however, you can also do it in your oven. Blanch fruit and vegies first, then slice and dip in a mixture of lemon juice and water to preserve colour. Lie on a wire rack or baking tray and heat oven to its lowest temperature. Place produce in the oven, leaving the door ajar at least 5cm with the fan on. Drying times vary greatly from 12–24 hours. Once cool, store in sterilised airtight jars. Be sure to check regularly during the first week for any signs of moisture as it will cause mould.

Take note

Fruit and vegetables suited to drying include apples, apricots, bananas, cherries, chillis, coconuts, dates, figs, garlic, grapes, mushrooms, nectarines, onions, peaches, pears, peas, peppers, pineapples, plums and sweet corn.



Photobrary

PERIODIC TABLE

How long can you keep produce for?

Po

Potatoes: Dig up when the green top growth has withered. Dry, brush clean then store in a cool, dry, airy, dark place. The best keepers are fully mature or 'old' potatoes – 'new' potatoes don't keep. Ideal storage temperature is 7–10°C (not in the fridge). Maximum storage is 10 weeks.

Eg

Eggplant: Cut when shiny and firm, leaving 3–4cm of stem attached. Eggplant is ripe when you press the flesh and it leaves an indent. Can be grilled and stored in oil, salted and stored in oil or blanched and frozen for 12 months. Also makes tasty preserve, chutney or relish.

Pu

Pumpkins: Pick when fully formed and coloured when leaves and stems wither. Cut from the vine, leaving 10cm of wrinkled stem attached. Let the fruit dry for a couple of weeks before storing in a cool dry place. Traditional Queensland Blue is one of the best keepers, lasting for months if its skin is undamaged.

P

Peas: Pick shelling or sugar snap peas when the pods are about 8cm long and the peas inside look round and full. Pick snow peas at same length when peas are barely visible inside the pod. To freeze, blanch for a few seconds, dry and freeze on a tray. Store frozen peas in an airtight plastic bag for up to a year.

B

Beans: To store excess beans, blanch, dry and freeze, either cut, sliced or whole, on a large tray in a single layer. Once frozen, place in a snap-lock bag and return to the freezer. This ensures the beans remain separate. Frozen beans will last up to a year and can be cooked frozen.

O

Onions: Late or long-day onions are the best keepers. Dry the bulbs, trim roots, brush clean and store in a single layer in a cool, dry, dark and airy place. They should last for 2–3 months. Early and intermediate onions may last a month stored in similar conditions.

Sq & Z

Squash & zucchini: Pick when no more than 15cm long or, for button squash, 6cm in diameter. Leave at least 2cm stem to maintain freshness. Freezing is the best method of long-term storage. To freeze, slice, blanch, dry and place in an airtight bag in the freezer for up to 12 months.

Sc

Sweet corn: Pick when silks at top of cob turn brown and dry. A fingernail pushed into one kernel will cause a milky fluid to leak out. If it's clear, cobs are not ripe. To freeze corn, remove husks, blanch cobs, dry and freeze in airtight bags. Lasts up to a year.

Ch

Chillies: Pick when full-sized at any stage from unripe green to fully ripe red. Wear gloves and either cut from the plant or gently pull upwards. Air dry in a single layer for 12-month storage or make chilli sauce, chilli flakes, chilli powder and chilli jam.

Bt

Beetroot: Does not freeze. Preserve by cooking and bottling it using a home-preserving kit. Pickled, cooked beetroot will keep in fridge in lidded container for a few weeks. Bottled, it'll last for years. Cook before peeling.

FOR VEGETABLES

Find out in our pick-and-keep table below.

C

Carrots: Pull carrots any time in their lifecycle as soon as they're a useable size. For long-term storage, freeze carrots whole or sliced. Blanch first, then dry. To keep sliced carrots separate, freeze in a single layer. When frozen transfer to airtight bag and return to freezer. Frozen carrots last up to a year.

T

Tomatoes: Leaving a small amount of stem, clip from the plant when fully coloured. Traditional preserving methods such as bottling allow them to be used for months or turn them into tomato sauce, paste or chutney. You can also dry or semi-dry tomatoes in the oven on the lowest heat setting. Store in oil in the fridge or freeze the dried fruit whole.

G

Grapes: Pick only when fully ripe and sweet. Keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few weeks. For longer storage, excess grapes can be turned into jam, juice or wine. Frozen grapes are also a treat for kids. Use a home dehydrator to make sultanas or raisins and store in an airtight jar for several months.

Ct

Citrus: Pick when fully coloured after taste-testing for ripeness. Store in a dry dark place wrapped in tissue paper in a single layer. Check often for signs of grey mould. Freeze excess as juice in ice-cube trays, make marmalade or, in the case of lemons, preserve in salt, Moroccan-style. Preserved lemons last at least a year.

Pa

Pineapples: Ready when plump, golden and firm but not hard with a slight fragrance. Cut from the plant using a sharp knife. Store in the fridge in a plastic bag. For long-term storage slice and dehydrate, preserve in syrup, freeze as freshly squeezed juice or make into chutney.

Br

Berries: Snip from the plant, taking care not to damage the fruit. Do not wash. Store in a breathable container or paper bag in the fridge and wash just before use. Freeze excess berries on a tray to keep separate or turn into jam or sauce for 12-month's storage.

M

Mangoes: Ripe when they smell sweet and the flesh yields when gently squeezed. Cut with a 5cm stalk. Mangoes do not freeze well so look up a good chutney recipe, try a mango lassi or dehydrate sliced mango. Store dehydrated slices in an airtight plastic bag or container.

Sf

Stone fruit: Pick when fully coloured with stems attached. Harvest and handle gently to avoid bruising. Excess fruit can be frozen whole for later use in cooking, preserved in sugar syrup, made into jam or even dehydrated.

Take note!

- **Harvest squash and zucchini before their skins become tough and the flesh bitter.**
- **Different beans grow to different lengths. Blue Lake grows to 17cm, Butter beans 14cm and Snake beans to 30cm.**
- **Some greens such as spinach can be frozen. Others, like lettuce, will disintegrate and can only be eaten fresh.**

COOL, DRY STORAGE

Root vegies and some fruits can be stored for several weeks or even months under cool, dry and dark conditions. Under the house is usually the most practical place as long as certain conditions are met.

Coolness

Best storage temperatures between 7–10°C. Cooler, fridge-like temperatures can alter taste and colour of stored produce while higher ones may cause sprouting or rotting.

Darkness

The space must exclude all light, especially for root crops such as potatoes.

Airiness

Good ventilation keeps the air fresh and reduces the chance of mould or mildew.

Dryness

Any sign of darkness will encourage rotting. The ground and walls must not become wet or damp in rainy weather.

Vermin-proof

It's essential to ensure any area in which food is stored is vermin-proof.



ABOVE: Storing in a single layer keeps produce well-ventilated. Wrapping in tissue minimises rotting by separating individuals.

Growing a vegie patch

Growing your own bountiful harvest of fresh wholesome vegies is a relaxing and rewarding way to spend time in the garden.

By Carroll Baker

Autumn is a great time to get started on a vegie patch. The days are mild so you won't be sweltering in the summer sun, and there are fewer garden pests to contend with. You'll also be harvesting your first crop of fresh, flavoursome vegies just in time to make hearty winter casseroles and soups.

Location, location, location

Growing vegetables need lots of sunlight, so it's important to position your garden in an open sunny spot that has some shelter from the wind. Your vegie patch needs to be away from leafy trees and shrubs as they compete for soil nutrients and their root systems may encroach on it.

Think about what you'd like to plant, and draw up a plan. Autumn family favourites include peas, broccoli, parsnip, broad beans, onions, and cabbage – but there are many other options so take a look at our autumn planting guide on page 130.

Prepare the soil

To ensure a bumper crop, you'll need to enrich the soil with vital nutrients before you plant. Garden soil doesn't contain enough nutrients to sustain vegetable growth; it needs to be infused with organic matter. For more information on soil improvement, refer to our guide on page 78.

Garden layout

How much space will you need? If you're looking to supply the bulk of your family's

fresh produce, according to The Diggers Club's *The Australian Fruit & Vegetable Garden*, 10m² should yield over 240kg of vegetables. If you don't have that much space, make a smaller garden to fit the area available. You can lay out two 2.4m treated pine sleepers lengthways then cut a third sleeper in half for each end. This gives you approximately 3m².

Plant smaller crops such as Asian greens at the front and taller plants, such as peas which grow up a trellis, at the rear so they don't block the sunlight.

Some vegetables take up more room than others, so leave sufficient space when planting. Follow the written instructions on the seed pack or punnet when planting and then water in thoroughly.

Right crop, right time

Some vegetables thrive in summer while others grow well in the cooler months. It's important to plant vegetables in their optimal growing season so that you get the best from them. See our planting guide on page 130. Planning ahead and planting in the right season will result in a robust crop of vegetables all year round.

Companion planting

Certain plants can benefit from being placed near others. Companion planting can deter pests and naturally enhance vegetables' flavour. For example, planting sage near cabbage repels the Cabbage White Butterfly.



GAP Photos/Graham Strong

Avoid waste

If all vegies ripen at the same time, you'll have a glut. This can mean you have to give vegies away, preserve them or throw them out. Plan and plant the patch so that crops mature at different times. Efficient use of space avoids overplanting while timing is crucial to a manageable harvest.

**Frequent attention
is essential for
success with home-
grown produce.**

Vital vegie garden tips

- **Rotate crops each growing season to help prevent the soil becoming nutrient deficient. It also reduces the risk of soil-borne disease.**
- **When planting, make sure you leave enough space between rows to walk so you can water, weed and harvest.**
- **Be vigilant about insect pests. Take action early and you can remove them by hand before they damage your crops.**

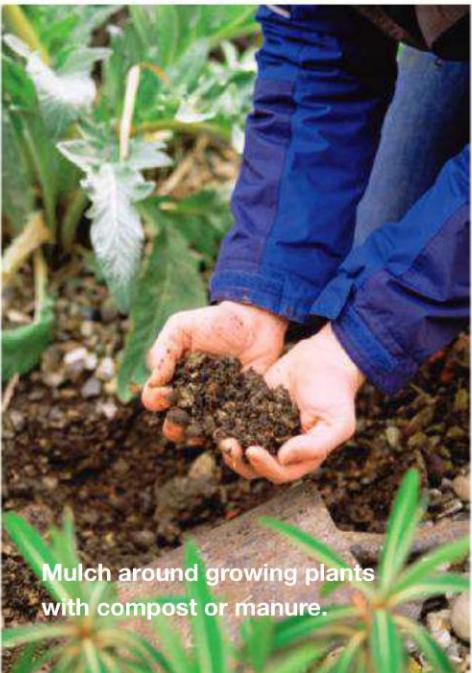


If it doesn't rain, water the vegie patch every day or two in the morning.

GAP Photos/BBC Magazines

Garden maintenance

- Regularly remove weeds from your vegetable patch as they compete for soil nutrients and harbour pests.
- Water your growing plants thoroughly and often, but don't overwater or you'll wash away vital soil nutrients.
- Mulch to retain water and add organic matter and fertiliser regularly to boost plant growth.



Mulch around growing plants with compost or manure.

GAP Photos/FHF Greenmedia
Rice Buckland



10m² is enough space to keep a small family in vegies but 3m² is a good size for beginners.

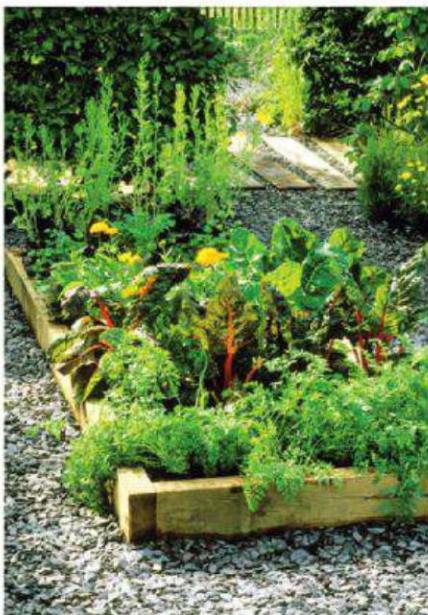
A woman with blonde hair tied back is kneeling in a garden, tending to a raised bed. She is wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt with a small red floral pattern and blue jeans. She is wearing sandals and is barefoot in the garden bed. The garden bed is made of weathered wooden planks and is filled with lush green leafy plants, likely lettuce. The ground around the bed is covered with wood chips. The background shows more greenery and a wooden fence.

Old painters' boards can
be used to create beds for
your vegie garden. Fill
them with good quality
bought soil and you're
ready to plant.

5 steps to better, richer soil

Improving your soil before planting ensures a bumper crop. Find out how to improve soil for vegetable patches, specifically, but the principles apply to any part of the garden.

If a food crop isn't given the best possible conditions, its quality suffers. You won't enjoy a thick-skinned dry tomato, bitter lettuce or tough broccoli and that's just how they'll turn out if the soil doesn't supply the water and nutrients they need. Veggies need full sun for all or most of the day, moisture but not wetness around their roots at all times and soil that not only contains the full range of nutrients, but is also friable – that is open, crumbly and easy for roots to penetrate.



Step 1

DIG it up

Digging aerates and breaks up soil and also lets you see what it's made of. Unless your soil is very sandy, which will be easy to dig, most soil forms clods when you dig it over. The more clay in the soil, the harder to dig and the more cloddy it is. Dig the soil over to the depth of the blade of your spade, roughly breaking up the clods and removing any roots, stones and the bulbs or tubers of any weedy plants. Use a file or angle grinder to put a sharp edge on the spade for easier digging.

Step 2

ADD organic matter

Cow or horse manure shovelled free from farms and stables is ideal but you can also use home-made or bought compost or a mix of compost, manure and organic products such as blood and bone or pelletised chicken manure. You need quite a lot to make any difference – a 30L bag of cow manure for every square metre isn't too much. If you have infertile sandy soil, you'll need to add a lot of organic matter to give it body. Organic matter improves the structure and water-holding capacity of the soil, causing particles of soil to clump together into 'crumbs', creating more space for air and water. Organic matter is also the food for soil organisms, whose eating and excreting increases the fertility and

absorbency of the soil. It's essential to renew organic matter every time you replant the vegie patch.

Step 3

SPREAD fertiliser

Fertiliser adds the nutrient oomph that soil needs. If you add enough manure-based organic matter and reapply it every time you replant the patch, you can get away with not using fertiliser. However, sprinkling controlled-release fertiliser as you add organic matter is good insurance.

Step 4

ADD lime

Lime or dolomite lime contains calcium, which is an important nutrient and also reduces soil acidity. In most parts of Australia, soil is naturally acidic and as manure is acidic, too, sprinkling a handful or two of lime over every square metre once a year is a good idea. If your soil is naturally alkaline, don't add lime.

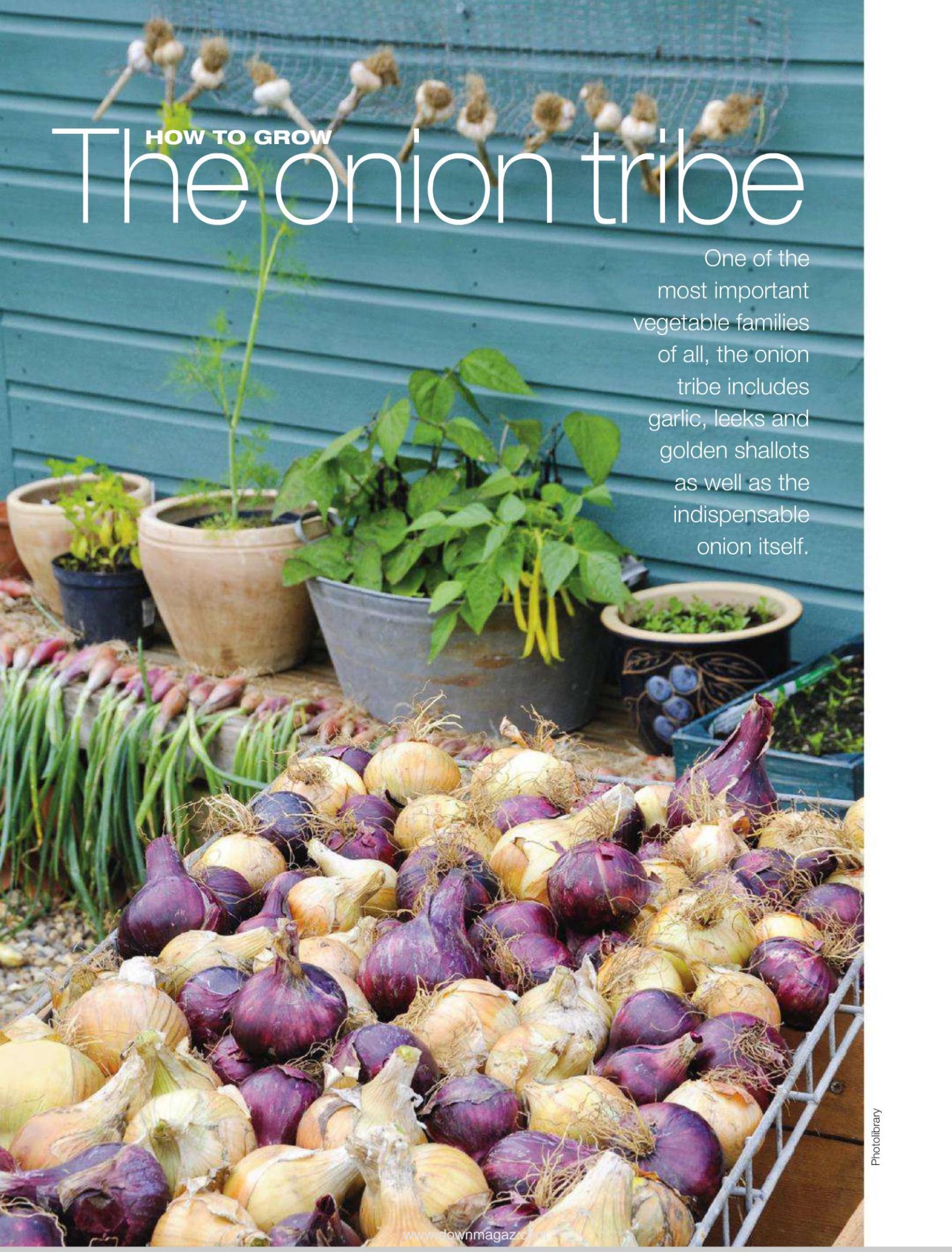
Step 5

DIG it through

Dig all the additives through the soil thoroughly. The finished result should be soil that is fine and crumbly. Water the patch well and let lie for a week or two. This allows soil organisms to start breaking down additives into nutrients that are more easily accessible by plant roots. Now you're ready to grow the best vegies you've ever eaten.

Can't dig it?

Heavy clay is hard to dig and almost impossible to blend organic matter through. Use a mattock to break up the surface, then spread horticultural gypsum over it. Water in and 3 weeks later dig it again. It'll be a little easier but you'll probably need more gypsum. When you can dig the surface, start adding organic matter and dig that thoroughly through. Alternatively, build a raised bed (at least 20cm high) and fill it with good quality bought soil.

A collage of images showing various onions, garlic, and other vegetables in pots and on a table. In the background, a row of garlic bulbs hangs from a string. In the foreground, a large pile of harvested onions (red, yellow, and purple) sits on a table. Behind the onions, several potted plants are visible, including a tall green plant in a terracotta pot and a large leafy plant in a metal tub. A small potted plant with yellow flowers sits in a blue and gold patterned pot. A blue wooden structure is visible in the background.

HOW TO GROW

The onion tribe

One of the most important vegetable families of all, the onion tribe includes garlic, leeks and golden shallots as well as the indispensable onion itself.

All members of the onion tribe need similar growing conditions: full sun, free-draining fertile soil enriched with compost and a dusting of lime dug through it at planting time. As with other vegetables, it's a good idea to practice crop rotation when growing any of the onion tribe. This means not growing them in the same place for at least three years to prevent the build-up of any soil-borne pests or diseases. All the onion family like to grow through the cooler months, so put the vegie patch to good use over winter by filling it with an experimental collection of these amazingly useful vegetables.

Read on for specific growing advice for each of the different members of the onion tribe.

ONIONS

The head of the tribe

Including brown, white and red varieties, onions are the most widely grown and eaten member of the tribe. They're not hard to grow but it's important you plant specific types of onions at specific times of the year, depending on where you live. To find out more, see 'Which onions to plant when', above right.

How to get started with onions

You can sow seeds or plant nursery-bought seedlings. With seeds, sow them thinly in shallow trenches where you want them to grow. During the 2 weeks seeds will take to come up, they must be kept constantly moist. It's also essential that you pull out any weeds that come up as soon as they appear otherwise they'll outgrow and smother the onions. Weed competition is the chief problem with seeds. Seedlings are easiest to space properly and, for the beginner, probably the best choice. Even if you do choose seedlings, you'll still have to keep the weeds down.



GAP Photos/Elke Borkowski

Which onions to plant when

Onions are sensitive to day length. When sunlight exceeds a certain number of hours, the plants will stop making leaves and start to form onions. If that is too soon in their life, the bulbs will be uselessly small, but if you don't get enough hours, the plants will never form onions. In southern Australia, summer days are much longer than winter days. But in northern Australia days are about the same length through the year. In middle Australia, day lengths are somewhere in between. Onions come in varieties which form bulbs when days are long, when days are short or when days are in between. Generally, if you live in southern Australia (far southern New South Wales, Victoria or Tasmania), you can grow any type of onion. If you live in middle Australia (Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane most of New South Wales and southern Queensland), you'll have most success with intermediate or short-day varieties. In northern Australia, choose only short-day varieties. Short-day onions are also known as 'early' onions, intermediates as 'mid-season' and long-day varieties are called 'late' onions.

Late April to mid-May is the best time to start onions and, except in northern Australia, you can continue to plant until the end of winter. Planted in April, short-day onions will be ready for harvest in early spring, intermediates in late spring and long-day onions will form in summer. Long-day types are the best keepers.

In subtropical and tropical areas, where soils may remain moist, bend the tops of onions over as soon as they begin to turn brown. This speeds up the drying process and reduces the risk of rotting.

Routine care

Encourage rapid establishment and fast growth by feeding newly planted or sown onions. Run a thin line of superphosphate in a trench along each planting row and cover with soil then, at monthly intervals, apply a complete plant food formulated for vegetables around the plants.

As they grow, onion bulbs often work their way up through the soil. This is normal – don't replant them. The leaves die down when ready to harvest so let the top brown and wither before pulling them. Trim dead leaves and store onions in a dry, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight.



GAP Photos/FHF Greenmedia

Grower's tip

Weeds outgrow all members of the onion tribe. Always remove weeds by hand as soon as they appear. Don't let them become established.



GOLDEN SHALLOTS

Foodies love them

Producing a cluster of bulbs rather than a solitary one, golden shallots are revered in French cuisine due to their fragrance and aroma once cooked. You will also see them referred to as French shallots, eschalots or just shallots.

Getting started with Golden shallots

Buy the golden brown bulbs at the greengrocer and separate into individual cloves. Plant with the pointy end upward in the garden from now until June. Being an intermediate-day bulb, it grows easily in most areas of Australia except humid subtropical and tropical regions. Easy to grow but expensive to buy, they're the ideal onion crop to choose if space is limited. Successful in pots.

Routine care

Keep lightly, evenly moist and harvest when the tops fall over (usually the following summer). Allow to dry before storing in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight. Replant some of your own bulbs for the next crop.

From a single bulb, Golden shallots produce a cluster of small bulbs. Plant them about 20cm apart to allow for this.



GAP Photos/Clive Nichols



GARLIC

The kitchen essential

Garlic is popular around the world, not just for its culinary attributes, but also its medicinal properties. Select a mixture of early, mid and late season varieties to extend your harvest.

How to get started with garlic

As long as it is labelled 'organic' and is a local product, you can grow garlic from cloves broken from a store-bought knob. Non-organic imported garlic may not grow due to the chemical or physical treatment it has received on entering Australia. Garlic needs a cold, rainy winter and is most successful in southern Australia. It can be planted from about mid-April. In warmer climates, plant garlic in early winter and, prior to planting the cloves, refrigerate them for six weeks. Push individual cloves a couple of centimetres below the soil, pointy end up.

Routine care

Keep the soil lightly and evenly moist but never wet for long periods. If you prepared and enriched the soil, no further fertilising is needed. As summer nears, reduce watering and when tops begin to wither, allow the plants to go dry. Harvest when the top withers then hang the bulbs to dry.

Imported garlic has the root plate scooped out as a quarantine measure. These bulbs won't grow so only plant locally grown garlic with roots attached, as shown.

Photolibrary

As long as you not only plant them deeply but also hill up the soil around them as they grow, you'll harvest leeks with the longest lengths of usable white shanks. You can start to harvest baby or pencil leeks anytime from about 12 weeks.



Photolibrary

LEEEKS

Worth the wait

Grown for their tender white shank, leeks taste much milder than onions and can be used in soups or braised and served whole as a main vegetable.

Getting started with leeks

Because you want a long, white shank, leeks are grown in deep holes. That means you can't sow seeds where you want them to grow. Either sow seeds in punnets and transplant later or buy them as seedlings from the nursery. To plant, follow the directions in the pictures at right. Leeks take about 5 months to reach the size you see in the shops and, because you won't want dozens all at once, it's a good idea to plant small batches at 3 week intervals. Space them about 20cm apart to give the plants room to grow.

Routine care

After about six weeks, hill up extra soil around the shanks of the plants or slip a cardboard tube over their bases. Either method stops sunlight from reaching the shanks and causes them to turn from green to white. Harvest when required by pulling from the soil. Always wash leeks thoroughly to remove soil wedged between the layers of leaves.



GAP Photos/ Clive Nichols



GAP Photos/Maxine Adcock

1 Remove seedlings from their punnet then carefully separate each seedling. Wash off any potting mix adhering to the roots.

2 Trim the roots to a length of about 1cm. This makes it easier to slip the seedlings into their planting holes.

3 Make deep planting holes ($\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the seedlings deep) and drop one seedling into each. There's no need to fill in, just water in.



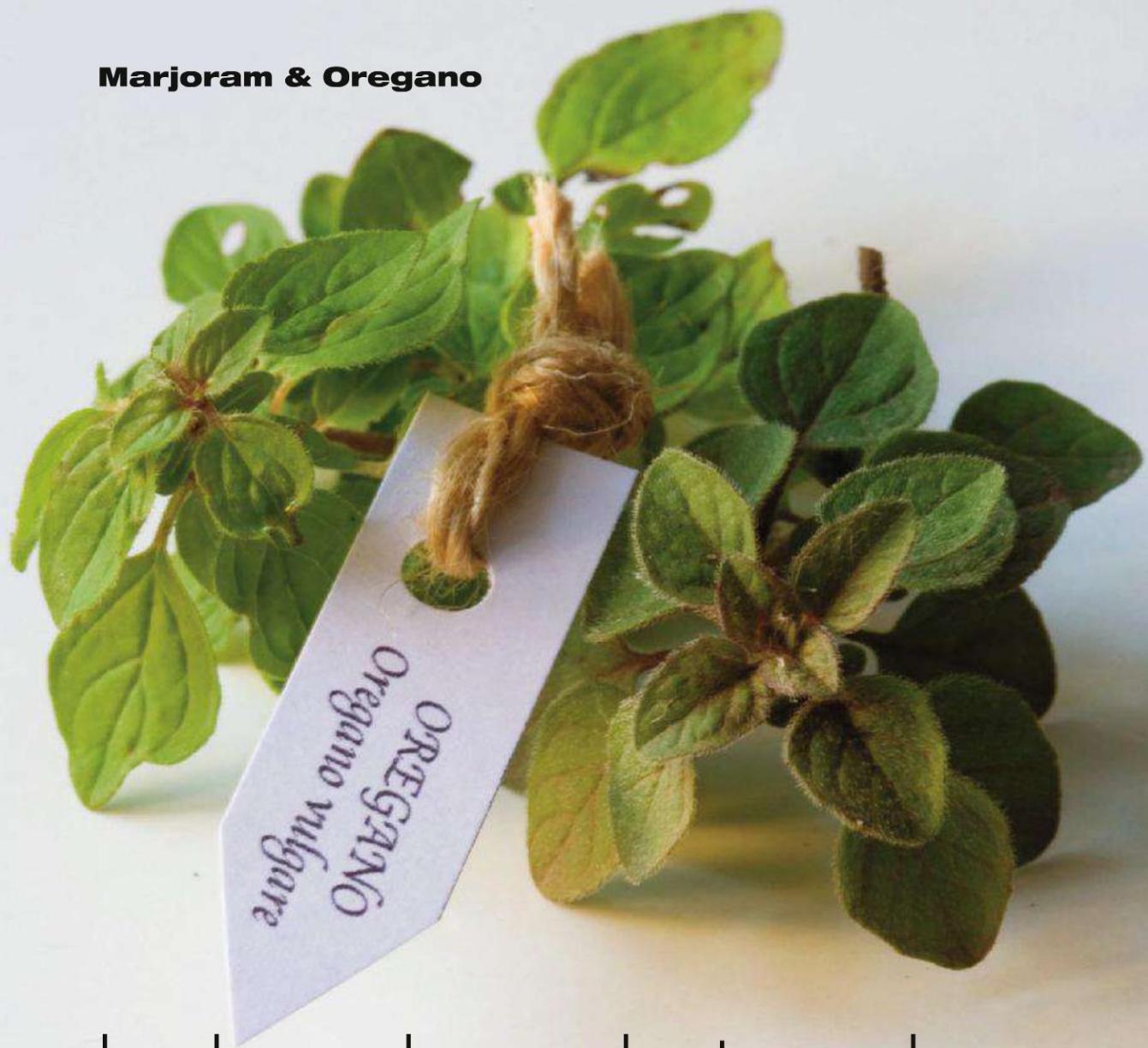
GAP Photos/FhF Greenmedia

Botanic names of the onion tribe

Onions (*Allium cepa*) Golden shallots (*Allium cepa* var *aggregatum*)

Garlic *Allium sativum* Leeks *Allium ampeloprasum* var *porrum*

Marjoram & Oregano



Herbal twins

By Marcelle Nankervis

Oregano and Marjoram are often confused, not only in gardens but nurseries too. While they can be interchangeable and have many similarities, it is their differences that make these herbs essential ingredients in your kitchen.

Mediterranean herbs that share the same genus, oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) and marjoram (*Origanum majorana*) are undoubtedly alike in appearance, but are actually very different in both habit and taste.

Although, it is easy to see how they would become totally confused. It all starts with their name. While they share the genus *Origanum*, most species are commonly referred to as marjorams. Not only this, but oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) can also be called wild marjoram!

So how do we distinguish between these wonderfully fragrant but similarly named herbs?

The most reliable method is smell and taste.

Culinary comparison

Origanum majorana, also known as sweet marjoram, is considered subtle, delicate and much sweeter in flavour to oregano. *Origanum vulgare*, on the other hand, is at the other end of the spectrum, often described as strong and brash.

Of course, there are also many other species and varieties of *Origanum* too, each with a slightly different taste.

So how do you choose? It's simple. Crush a leaf in your hand. You'll be able to smell the difference and subsequently select the right plant to suit your palate.

In the garden

Distinguishing between marjoram and oregano can be tricky because they grow differently depending on soil, climate and planting position. Sometimes leaves are larger or smaller, more rounded or pointy, as well as more or less hairy depending on where they are growing. But there are some differences which will help you identify marjoram from oregano.

The closely related herbs mature at different times of the year. They also have different growth habits. Marjorams are considered more attractive and better suited to garden plantings. In contrast, oregano is a survivor, growing well in tough conditions where most herbs would fail to thrive.

Did you know

Both oregano and marjoram can be substituted for thyme in most recipes.

Spot the difference

Oregano leaves are more rounded at the tip than sweet marjoram, and are often smaller, growing on a somewhat leggier plant.

Marjoram is more compact, which is why it has been traditionally popular in knot gardens and parterres.

Oregano

Oregano is a hardy, drought-tolerant perennial herb. Best suited to sandy free-draining soils, oregano will grow in most soil types and situations as long as it is not subjected to prolonged exposure to wet soils or excessive shade. Thriving in alkaline conditions, *Origanum vulgare* grows well in exposed sites including coastal locations. Grow from seed in spring. Use fresh or dried.

Botanical name: *Origanum vulgare*

Height: 30–40cm

Soil: Well-drained sandy soil

Situation: Full sun

Water: Drought tolerant

Sow: Spring



GAP Photos/Jo Whitworth

Marjoram

Marjoram is taller, bushier and more attractive in habit than oregano, but is much less hardy. Better suited to enriched garden situations, *Origanum majorana* is at home among perennial flowers and in cultivated garden beds. A perennial which is commonly grown as an annual, marjoram leaves are greyish-green and create an excellent contrast in the garden. Grow from seed sown in autumn. Use fresh for maximum impact.

Botanical name: *Origanum majorana*

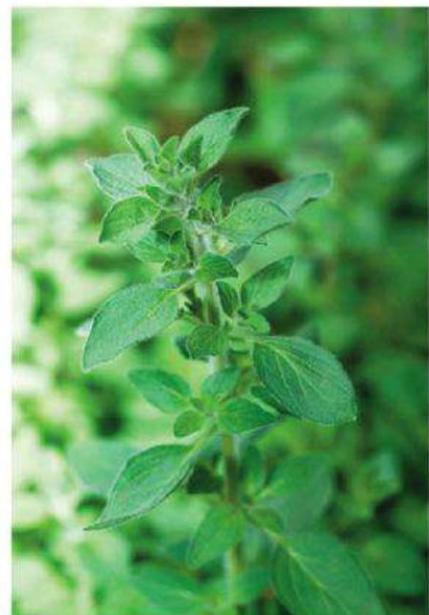
Height: 60–90cm

Soil: Enriched free draining soil

Situation: Full sun

Water: Periodic watering

Sow: Autumn

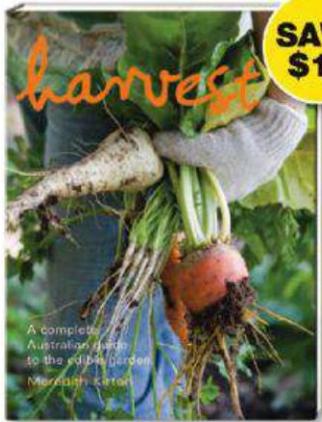


Photosynthesis

Top 3 Herb Growing Tips

1. Pick regularly to delay flowering and encourage compact growth.
2. When flowers start to appear, harvest all the leaves and dry, leaving only a couple of plants to run to seed.
3. Collect seed for sowing new plants next year.

Save on these gardening classics



SAVE
\$15

Harvest by Meredith Kirton

This beautifully illustrated book by bestselling gardening author Meredith Kirton will inspire you to grow, harvest and cook your own seasonal fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices.

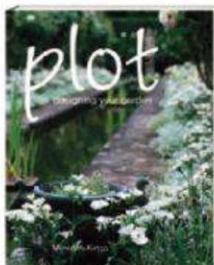
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Dig: Seasonal Gardening by Meredith Kirton

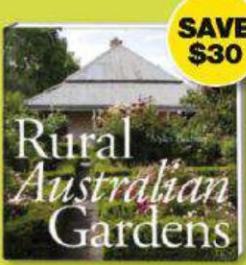
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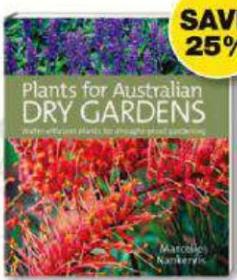


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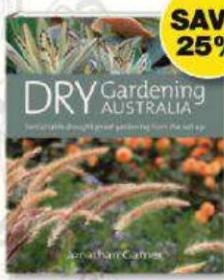
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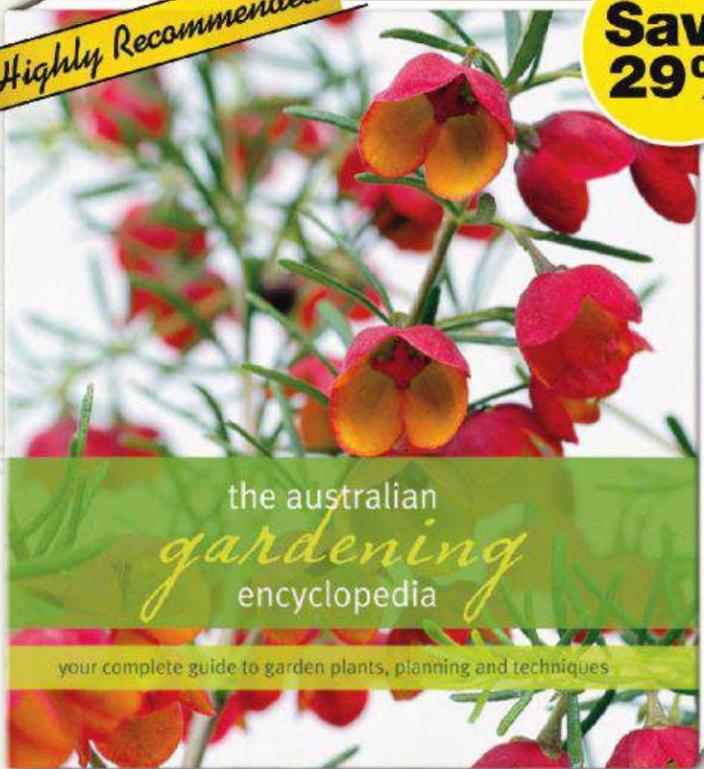
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Go see Ohinetahi

Described as a large formal garden, New Zealand's Ohinetahi is much more – a contemporary garden, art gallery, tribute to native plants and a place where living garden history is punctuated by magnificent views.

Words by Paul Urquhart Photographs by Chris L Jones

Ohinetahi is a true New Zealand icon. It is the fruit of a collaboration between one of nation's leading architects, Sir Miles Warren, Pauline Trengrove, his artist sister, and her husband, John, also an architect. Covering 1.2ha, the garden offers visitors a chance to see proportion and perspective in action.

They found inspiration in the great 20th century gardens of England, principally Hidcote Manor but also Sissinghurst Castle. Some of the ideas pioneered in these classic gardens found another home half way round the world in Governors Bay in the South Island. Just a short car ride away from Christchurch, Ohinetahi is the perfect side trip when you're visiting the fantastic Ellerslie

International Flower Show in March.

The garden surrounds a Victorian sandstone house once owned by New Zealand's first botanist, T H Potts. When Sir Miles and the Trengroves bought the ramshackle house, the garden was neglected but enclosed by a precious canopy of mature trees. These sheltered the property and provided the perfect nursery bed for the garden as it is now.

The viewer first sees a formal garden around the house but, down a steep embankment, New Zealand native plants take over and lead you into an enchanted woodland with exquisite views of the shoreline, rugged hills and Lyttleton Harbour. A giant kinetic sculpture by New Zealand artist Phil Price catches the

wind and whirrs furiously – another of the unexpected delights that make Ohinetahi so special.

Reason behind the plan

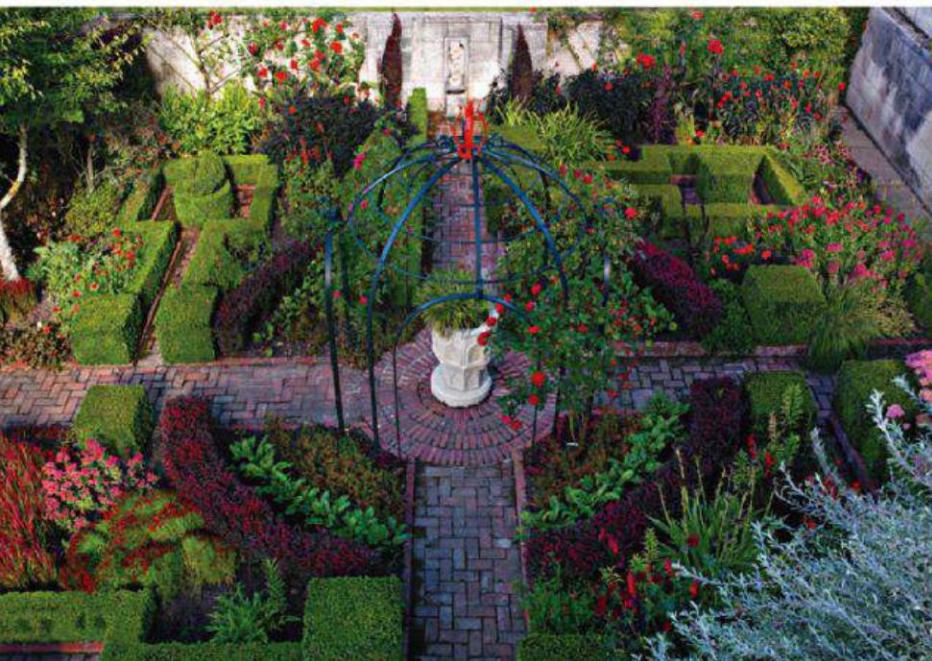
There are two main ways to deal with a large garden: create a singular open space in the form of a landscape park or divide the space into garden rooms with hedges and stone walls, the idea used at Ohinetahi.

TOP LEFT: Close to the house, the garden is at its most formal and manicured, designed for everyday family use, strolls of a not-too-taxing nature and entertaining guests.

TOP RIGHT: Gardens of a single colour were something of a fad early last century. Ohinetahi features a striking red garden adjacent to the house.



ABOVE: Sculptural ornamentation is a major feature at Ohinetahi, much of it as old and historic as the 19th century house itself.



There was a reason for doing this, besides the aesthetic of the time. Winds there are fierce and to grow a wide range of plants protection from them, in the form of large yew hedges, trees and walls, was essential.

Formal design elements

Close to the house, wide stone paths divide the large lawn and create separate zones for sitting and social gatherings. At the end of each is a focal point – a formal parterre, an exquisite perennial border, a tower and so on. The garden is laid out on a strict east-west and north-south axial basis, its formal elements infilled with more or less informal plantings.

Art in the garden

Ornamentation plays a big part and here the modern sits with the classical. Over the course of his career, Sir Miles has collected many architectural elements including a row of columns, an obelisk and an antique fountain. Each is placed in the garden for maximum impact.

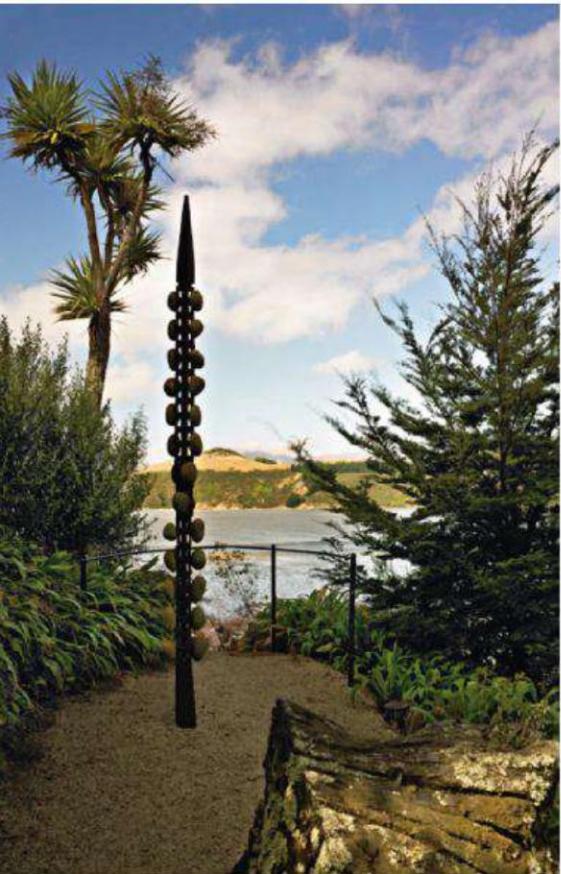
Modern pieces blend with the old, especially in the Red Garden – a bold mélange of Dahlias, Lobelias, roses and Salvia in various shades of red.

At the back of the house, an above-ground swimming pool offers fantastic views of the surrounding Port Hills as well as the layout of the garden. But it is the perennial border that shines in the early autumn. It's an artistic combination of blue, mauve, violet and lilac set against deep, plummy foliage colours. Erupting from this are fountains of ochre-coloured grasses, such as the unrivalled *Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster'*.

Ohinetahi is a garden to drift through and enjoy, but is also a place to dissect ideas and find your own inspiration, just as it has been for its creator.

ABOVE LEFT: A set of Doric columns, one of Sir Miles' acquisitions, straddles a garden junction and evokes another age.

LEFT: From late spring to autumn, the Red Garden unfolds as a series of plants bloom.



ABOVE: Ranging between red and blue, the wide perennial borders flank the path leading to an elegant gazebo.

LEFT: Modern sculpture is scattered through the garden, usually beckoning visitors towards a point of interest such as this lookout over the sea.

RIGHT: Fine views of Lyttleton Harbour can be had from several parts of the garden.

Visit Ohinetahi as part of an easy day trip around the shores of the long inlet that is Lyttleton Harbour. There's a lot to see and enjoy in this region.



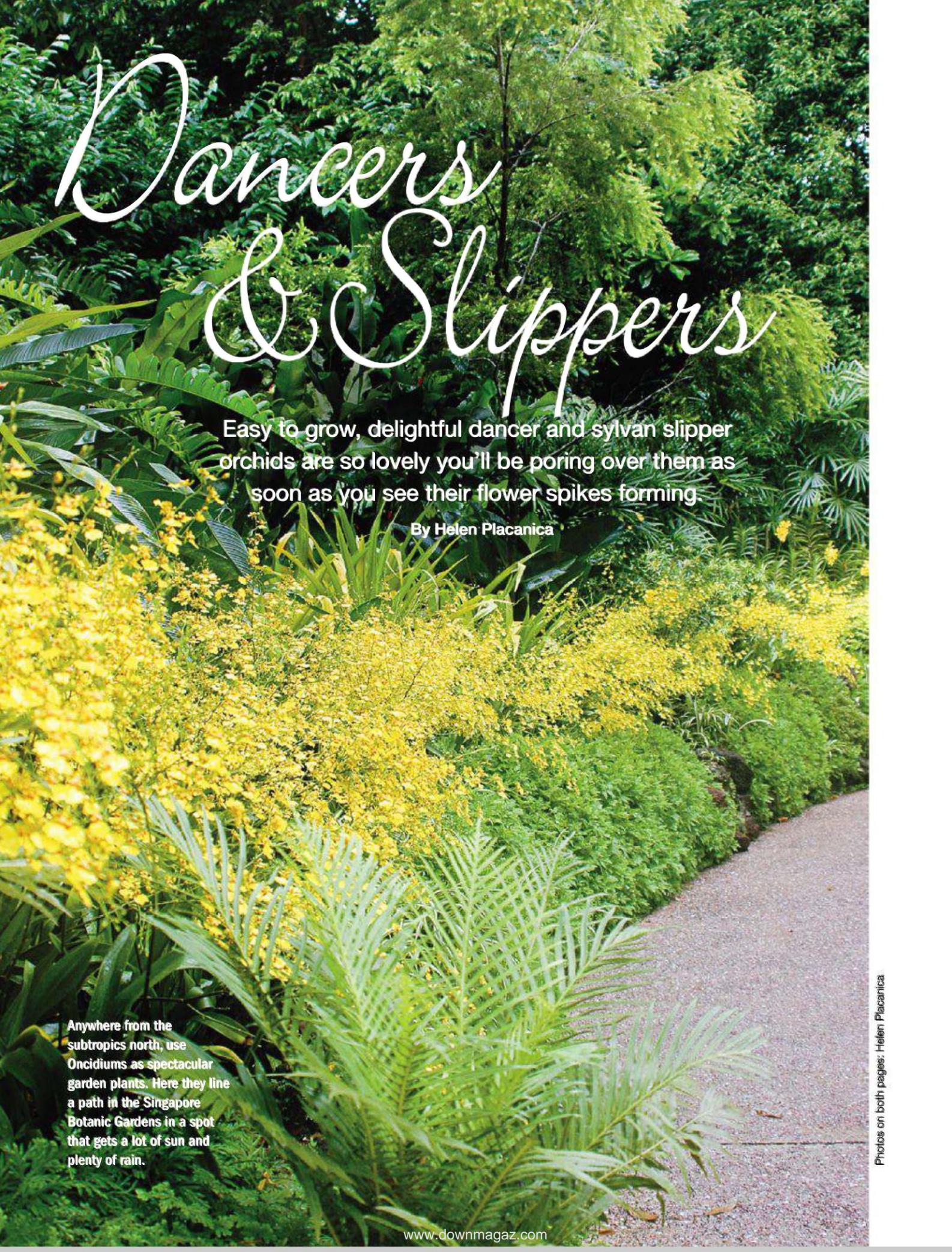
VISITORS INFORMATION

Ohinetahi Governors Bay RD1, Lyttelton, Christchurch. The garden is open from mid-September to mid-December and mid-January to mid-March. Phone (643) 329 9852 for appointments.

Ellerslie International Flower Show, Hagley Park, Christchurch, New Zealand. 9–13 March, 2011. Visit www.ellerslieflowershow.co.nz or call (643) 941 8999 for details about the show and other gardens to see near Christchurch.

Your Garden travelled to Christchurch courtesy of Tourism New Zealand and Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism.

Dancers & Slippers



Easy to grow, delightful dancer and sylvan slipper orchids are so lovely you'll be poring over them as soon as you see their flower spikes forming.

By Helen Placanica

Anywhere from the subtropics north, use Oncidiums as spectacular garden plants. Here they line a path in the Singapore Botanic Gardens in a spot that gets a lot of sun and plenty of rain.

Photos on both pages: Helen Placanica

You can grow these orchids outside year-round if you don't get frosts and your winters aren't cold and grey. If you do get frosts or your winter is cold and damp, just bring them into your brightest room over the coldest months and return them to the outdoors as soon as the weather warms up in spring.

Dancing ladies (Oncidiums) and Slipper orchids (Paphiopedilums) are both from the tropics but not necessarily the constantly warm and humid lowlands. Many species come from highland regions where nights and days can be cool to cold; this enables them to be grown outside in temperate regions. Both these orchids tolerate high summer temperatures – up to 38°C with high humidity – and both can withstand short bursts of temperatures as low as 2°C provided they're protected from frost. In cold areas, however, they're best grown indoors or in a glasshouse over the cooler months.

The Dancers

The magnificent dancing ladies – Oncidium hybrids or Oncs for short – debut in October and November in the tropics and subtropics, and later in summer further south. The flowers, carried on a single arching stem up to a metre long, are bright lemon yellow with a brown trim or pink with a bright red trim. A cluster in full bloom is truly a sight to behold.

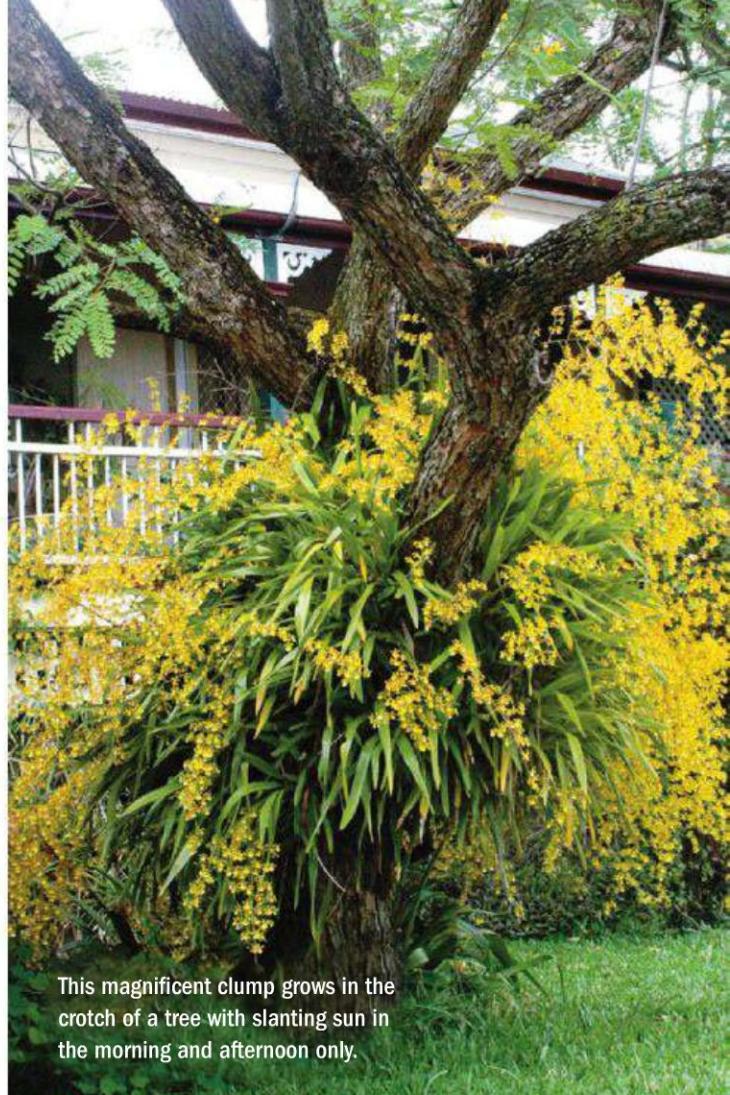
Oncs are epiphytes. That means they don't need soil in which to grow: they're happy clinging to rocks or nestled in the fork of tree branches and are equally suited to pots or hanging baskets filled with a loose, free-draining medium. Coarse orchid bark, through which the roots can easily grow, is fine. Oncs can also be attached to a backing board or a tree-fern fibre slab and used to decorate structures such as archways or pergola posts.

How much light?

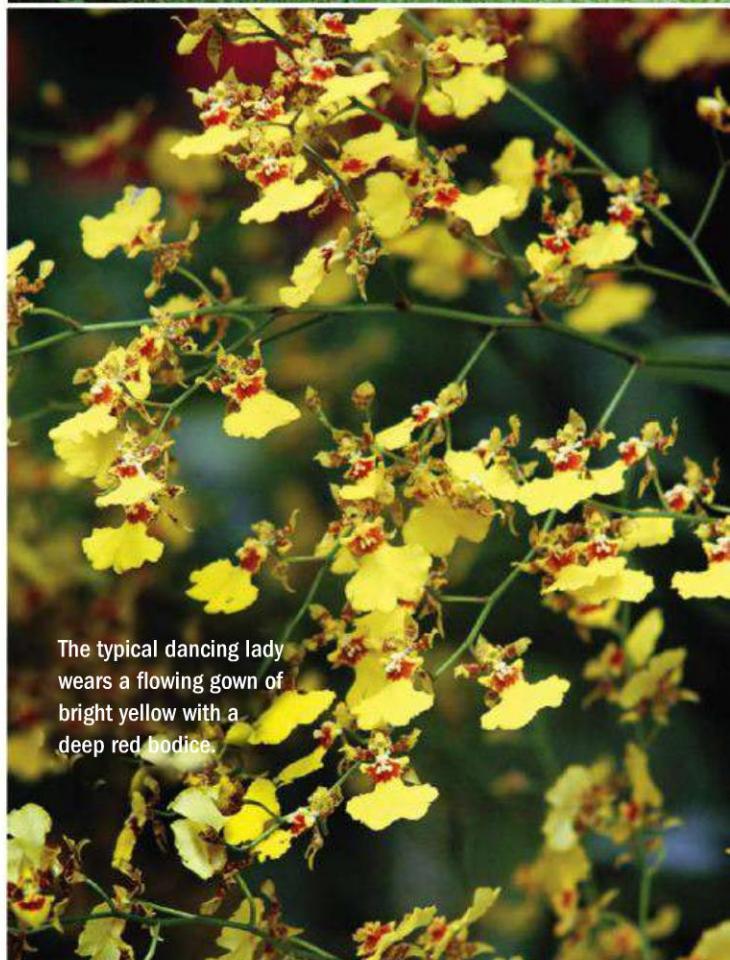
Oncs tolerate full sun but in hotter areas they are best grown in bright light with only about three hours of direct sunshine every day. The dynamic dancing ladies will soon let you know if they are not happy, though. Yellow foliage indicates too much light while dark green indicates an insufficiency. Conditions are just right when the foliage is a bright lime green.

Watering & feeding

If you use a liquid or soluble orchid fertiliser and make it up at its weakest strength, you can use it every time you water them. If you use a dry orchid fertiliser, apply it as directed on the pack. Water them according to the season. As much as you like in summer, but only once a week or less in winter and somewhere in between for spring and autumn. Because Oncs have a self-storage water system in the form of a swollen base or pseudobulb, they can tolerate dry periods and require only the occasional watering during winter if it doesn't rain.



This magnificent clump grows in the crotch of a tree with slanting sun in the morning and afternoon only.



The typical dancing lady wears a flowing gown of bright yellow with a deep red bodice.

Tips to Oncidium success



GAP Photos/Friedrich Strauss

Indoors in winter

- | Position in brightest light filtered through a gauze curtain if the sun is hot and likely to burn.
- | Keep away from heaters.
- | Move away from windows on cold nights.
- | While indoors, water once a week with tepid water.
- | Don't feed while indoors in winter.



Helen Placanica

Oncidiums in trees

When growing Oncidiums in a tree, pack sphagnum moss around the roots and attach with jute string. By the time the jute rots, the plant's tenacious roots will have securely anchored

The Slippers

Slipper orchids

Paphs – are renowned for their long-lasting, intricately patterned waxy blooms with the distinctive pouched and slipper-like labellum. Some produce only a single flower a season, others are multi-flowered with up to 10 blooms per stem, while the continuous-flowering species are rarely without flowers. There are 80 or so mostly terrestrial species, but the easiest and most forgiving of the Paphs are the hybrid cultivars, of which there are hundreds. Those with plain green leaves are more cold-tolerant than those with mottled ones. Grow them in shallow pots raised off the ground to maximise air circulation. Like Oncs, Paphs grow best in pots of coarse orchid bark.

How much light?

Paphs are shade lovers and are very particular about the amount of light they receive. They won't tolerate direct sunlight and if the light is too bright they will at best fail to flower and at worst die. So how much is just enough? A good test is to hold your hand about 15cm above a piece of white paper. If it casts the slightest of shadows, the light is just right.

Watering & feeding

Because Paphs don't have pseudobulbs for water storage, they should be kept constantly moist, but never sodden, through the warmest months but barely moist over the winter. A monthly dose of orchid-specific fertiliser during the growing season alternated with a weak application of seaweed or fish emulsion is recommended. Don't feed paphs during the dormant winter months.

When to repot

Orchid bark rots down over the course of a year or two. When that happens, repot into fresh, coarse bark straight after flowering or, in cooler areas, in mid-spring. Unpot and, if it has grown crowded, divide into smaller clumps, but don't be greedy. Separating out too many new plants will lead to slow regrowth, so be sure each new clump is a good size. Don't bother dividing if the plant does not look congested.

Repot into coarse bark



GAP Photos/Howard Rice

Where to buy

Contact an orchid society in your state for growers of Paphiopedilums or buy online at www.robertsonorchids.com.au. Oncidiums can often be found at farmers' markets or online from www.easyorchids.com or www.australianorchids.com.au.



**Paphs are dainty,
beautiful little orchids
ideal for pots in bright
sunrooms or on
sheltered decks.**



In their tropical homelands, Paphs (above) grow in rotting leaves on the floors of forests. In steamy, always hot lowland areas, patterned leaves are common and this type of Paph is easiest to grow in warmer areas. In the cooler, tropical highlands, plain green leaves are more common. *P. insigne* (left) has plain leaves and is one of the easiest to grow in cooler areas.



GAP Photos/Matt Anker

Go wild with flowers

The image of a swathe of wildflowers gracefully swaying in a gentle breeze is romantic and easily recreated in your own backyard.

Fields of delicate native daisies or a garden bed brimming with exotic meadow flowers have a natural unstructured look and are simple to grow from seed. By Deryn Thorpe

Gardeners in southern Australia often create these plantings in autumn using annual Paper daisies, which are native to Western Australia. However, many other wildflowers can be used too, or even common annual flowers that you can buy in punnets or seed packets at any local nursery.

A single species of flower planted en masse creates a dramatic scene but if you prefer variety, mix several species or colours together. In nature no more than a handful of species flower in a spring meadow, so fewer species – but lots of each – creates a more realistic effect.

A sunny spot and varieties that flower at the same time are essential for maximum impact. If you don't have a spare garden bed for the display, consider ditching the lawn or transforming your verge into a floral carpet, sprinkling seeds around existing perennials or using pots. You don't need a lot of space for a colourful show.

Expect flowers to start around August and continue through to October. Save some seeds for next year, then pull the plants out for a new summer planting.

LEFT: Simplicity is the essence of a successful wildflower bed. Achieve it by selecting one species as the dominant plant, such as these California poppies, with one or two others as highlights, like these tall Verbascums and a clump of giant Allium for contrast in size and colour.

Photolibrary

Billy Buttons (*Craspedia globosa*)





GAP Photos/Jo Whitworth

Exotic meadows

This planting, seen at the Chelsea Flower Show by designer Kate Frey, contrasts cool desert bluebells against a pretty field of warm shades including crimson Linum, Goldfields daisy and Poached-egg flower. At your place, sow seeds of blue Cornflowers, French marigold, Calendula, Queen Anne's lace and Poppies for a similar look. Perennials added to an exotic planting scheme look best if they have a natural meadow-like simplicity. Possible candidates are Osteospermum, Arctotis and Nemesia.



Chris L Jones

Golden Everlastings

Known as yellow or golden Everlastings, *Schoenia filifolia* are like little bursts of sunshine with lemon-yellow bracts and centres. There are five *Schoenia* species endemic to Western Australia. *Schoenia filifolia* is the most popular, growing to about 50cm tall with long thin leaves and a branching habit. *Schoenia cassiniana* is



Adam Woodhams

an attractive pink-flowered form but seed germination is erratic. The common golden Everlasting is easiest – just scatter seeds over the prepared ground and lightly rake into the surface. It looks terrific by itself or with just one companion. It's shown here with native *Alyogyne huegelii*.

Fringe lilies

From the winter-rainfall, south-western corner of WA comes the charming and dainty Fringe lily (*Thysanotus multiflorus*). It's a short-lived perennial that grows as a grassy clump about 50cm tall. It's best grown in moisture-retentive but not boggy soil in more than half a day's sun. Flowers start to appear around August along with most other wildflowers but Fringe lilies often keep on blooming until after Christmas, well past the season of Everlastings and other annual wildflowers. Fringe lilies do especially well with a 2cm-deep mulch of gravel, a look well suited to a wildflower planting.



Photolibrary

Purple and blue

Blue or purple-flowered plants are particularly attractive in the garden as they refresh the colour scheme when blended with white, pink and yellow flowers. One of the best known Australian perennial daisies (above) is *Brachyscome multifida* or the Cut-leaf daisy, which comes in mauve, blue, pink or yellow blooms. Most gardeners grow the compact form, about 40cm high and 60cm wide. Relative *Brachyscome iberidifolia* or the Swan River daisy, is an annual plant from Western Australia that grows to 45cm with masses of purple, blue or white flowers. The Blue-lace flower or Rottnest Island daisy (*Trachymene caerulea*) is another WA native with blue flowers, but these are lavender blue in a lacy pincushion form. Plant height varies from 20cm to 1.2m tall. Native meadow plants other than daisies include forms of *Ptilotus* or Pussy tails, a heat-tolerant species from Australia's arid and semi-arid areas. It has purplish fluffy flower heads and requires perfect drainage. If plants are cut back after flowering and then sparingly fertilised, they'll usually live for another season or two.



Chris L Jones



Photolibrary

Paper daisies

Daisies are traditional meadow flowers and Everlasting daisies, native to Western Australia, provide a pretty palette of colours including pink, salmon, white and yellow. All have stiff papery bracts instead of soft petals. There are 46 species in the Paper daisy family, with *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* the most widely grown due to its adaptability. It germinates readily from autumn-sown seeds and grows about 50cm tall in most areas, except the rainy tropics. It includes three subspecies, the most popular and charming being the pink and white *R. chlorocephala* ssp *rosea*. Other forms are ssp *chlorocephala*, or Western Sunray, and ssp. *splendida*, or Splendid everlasting, the biggest flowers that are grown for market. Unfortunately this form is the least reliable when it's grown from seed.

Perennial flowers

Adding some perennials to the planting scheme enables the area to still have some interest after annuals have finished for the year. In the Daisy line, perennials include the many members of the *Craspedia* genus, known as Billy buttons (pictured above) because of their yellow, globular flower heads, and the white *Ammobium alatum* or Winged everlasting that grows to about 50cm high. In the *Helichrysum* genus (under which many Australian Daisies were formerly classified) are a range of Paper daisies including *Helichrysum leucopsideum*, the delicate Satin everlasting, which is a traditional yellow and white Daisy that grows from 15 to 50cm tall. Other native perennials worth considering include *Conostylis* and Kangaroo paw.

Tips & hints

- **When pruning perennial *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, or golden Everlasting, save some cuttings as they strike very easily.**
- **Ensure that the selection of plants chosen have similar watering requirements.**
- **Annual plants grow for one season, blooming and dying within a few months. Perennial plants live for two years or more.**

Favourite exotic

Wildflowers

Tall growers – 80cm and up

- Cosmos ● Queen Anne's lace
(*Ammi majus* syn *Daucus carota*)
- Corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*)
- Spider flower (*Cleome hassleriana*)
- Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)

Medium growers – 40–80cm

- Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoes*)
- Shirley poppies (*Papaver rhoes* varieties)
- Iceland poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*)
- California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*)
- Linaria ● Silene ● Love-in-a-mist (*Nigella* sp)
- Chinese Forget-Me-Not (*Cynoglossum amabile*)
- Nemophila

Low growers – less than 40cm

- Livingstone daisy (*Dorotheanthus bellidiformis*)
- Alyssum ● Arctotis
- Lobelia ● English daisy ● Gazania

How to grow

Choose a sunny site – more than 4 hours of sun a day – with free-draining soil.

Eliminate all weeds before sowing or planting.

Dig the site over to loosen,

Crumble and aerate the soil.

Add controlled-release fertiliser according to packet instructions.

Rake the surface smooth and level.

Assist germination if you don't have sandy soil by spreading a 2cm layer of coarse, washed river sand on top of the soil.

Sow seeds anytime from April to June by scattering thinly, then gently raking them into the surface.

Water with a fine mist spray and keep the surface moist until germination occurs.

Scatter snail bait to protect the emerging seedlings. Be sure to use an iron-based formulation if you have dogs or cats at home.

If uneven germination occurs, re-sow any bald patches promptly.

Rainy winters? Then little or no further watering will be needed, but if they're dry, water the growing flowers as needed.



GAP Photos/Victoria Firmston

Save seeds & dry flowers

To preserve Everlasting blooms, pick before the flowers are fully open and hang them upside down in a cool dry place away from sunlight.

Seeds may be collected for the next season when flowers have fully opened. Store old flower heads in a labelled paper bag in a cool dry place. Plants will reseed in situ, but mulch, ants, water and wind result in fewer plants germinating each year.

Where to buy

Yates and Mr Fothergill's seeds, available from garden centres, sell many of the seeds mentioned. Yates also sells a 'Wildflowers of the World' seed mix.

Mail order

For Australian plant seeds, visit www.australianseed.com or www.wildflowersofaustralia.com.au.

Diggers club (www.diggers.com.au) sells single species seed and meadow mixes, such as wildflower and low-growing wildflower carpet mixes. Also available in bulk, which will cover up to 100m². Green Harvest sells many exotic and Australian varieties at www.greenharvest.com.au.

Cassandra Wiles

When she saw a development opportunity in Samoa, Australian Cass Wiles couldn't let it slip by.

Words and photos by Robin Powell



Cass helps Samoan farmers grow and market organic produce, which is packed for the Apia markets in baskets woven from fresh coconut fronds.

There is an organic fruit and vegetable market held every second Friday in Apia, the harbour capital of the Pacific island nation of Samoa. Buyers pick up fruit, vegetables and herbs packed into baskets woven from fresh green coconut fronds. The usual location is under the *ulu* trees opposite the old supermarket, but this week the market is part of the national festival. An audience drawn to its choir competitions, tattoo demonstrations, and competing beauty queens offers potential new customers for Samoa's burgeoning group of organic farmers.

Miss Compost

An Australian volunteer is behind the organic market: Cassandra Wiles. Cass is on a two-year contract with the Samoan-based non-government



organisation Women in Business, which is funded by AusAID through Volunteers International Development from Australia (VIDA). Hailing from Byron Bay on the north coast of New South Wales, Cass has a science degree and a background in conservation and regeneration. She'd long been keen to volunteer overseas on some kind of food production project, but whenever she checked the VIDA website, positions seemed only to be for nurses and teachers. She fell in love with the Pacific when she worked in Tonga for three months, so when she finally saw an opportunity for an organic development officer with Women in Business, she wasn't about to let it slip by.

Organic development has become a successful aspect of Women in Business, which was originally set

up to promote Samoan handicrafts. Cosmetics brand The Body Shop now sources all its organic coconut oil from Samoa, and New Zealand has recently started importing organically grown, tiny *Misi luki* sweet bananas.

Her boss says Cass is Samoa's 'Miss Compost'. It's a compliment, though as a title it carries less cachet than Miss Samoa, the honour being sought by the beauties posing for photographs beyond the vegetable baskets. Yet, there turns out to be remarkable similarities in their agendas: the pageant is ultimately taken out by Miss McDonald's Family Restaurants who, just like Miss Compost, aims to help develop a sustainable future for Samoa which preserves its traditional culture. And despite the apparent conflict with her sponsor, Miss Samoa is keen to promote a healthy lifestyle in a nation with a high incidence of diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Cass, meanwhile, is working to enhance the organic farming methods that are part of the Samoan tradition and to build markets for organic produce.

Traditional benefits

The organic program aims to link family farmers not just with individual consumers in the fortnightly Apia markets, but also with the tourist economy. Most restaurants and hotels import their produce, and shifting them to locally grown – especially organic – produce would make a huge difference to the livelihood of Samoan farmers. There is goodwill from hotels and restaurants, which recognise the value of being able to list organic local ingredients on their menus – as long as the farmers can solve the problem of consistent supply. One answer is better soil quality for better plant health, hence Cass' obsession with compost and her new moniker.

"In once sense composting isn't new here," she says. "In the plantations, where taro grows under coconut and

papaw, leaf litter is left between the plants and breaks down quickly. Yet traditionally the vegetable gardens are grown like ornamental gardens – very neat and clean, with bare earth showing. So it's not that I'm teaching anything new, just pointing out that the same traditional techniques also benefit vegetable growing."

The modern world

One of the challenges she faces is simply the low priority of income-generating work. Earning a living is not traditionally part of Samoan culture. They were late adopters of the notion of money – not surprising given they live in a land of ease and plenty. Families look after each other and the caring extends throughout the tight-knit villages. Family, church and community come first; working for money comes later. It's one aspect she loves about living in Samoa.

"I love that family comes first here, it's great to work in that environment, especially as I have my six-year-old son with me. He's always welcome to come to work with me."

The modern world though requires money, and farmers now are looking beyond simply providing for their families to earning income. One of the monsters standing in their way is the African snail. The international pest arrived a few decades ago and is wreaking its usual path of destruction. "It's massive," says Cass, "and massively fecund. You can break one open and find 500 eggs inside!" Ash and sand barriers are the usual defence, but when the rains come, everything is washed away.

Back to the future

The rains also dictate the variety of produce that can be grown. In the dry season, tomatoes and cucumbers boom but they rot in the wet. Then, the staples are eggplant, pumpkin, snake beans and the native edible-leaved hibiscus called *lau pele* (*Abelmoschus manihot*). If Samoans had



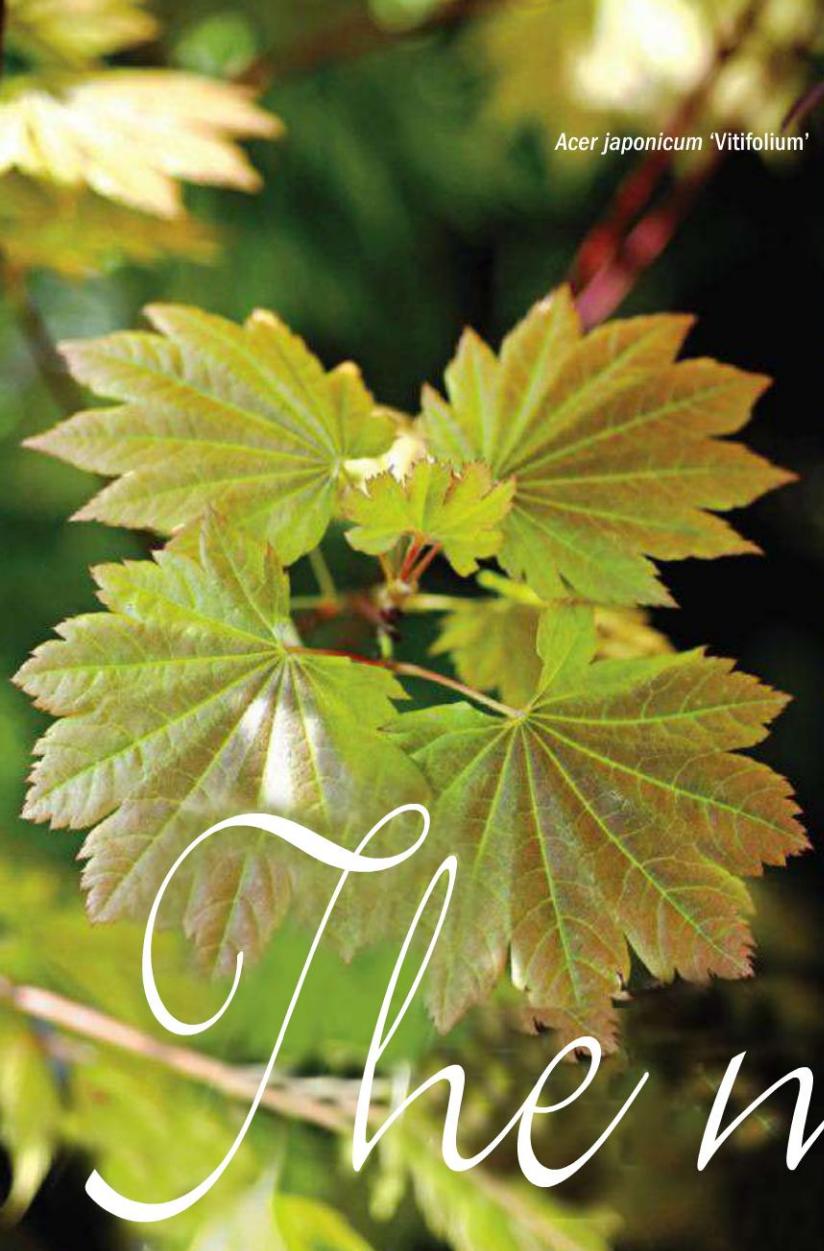
Through the NGO Women in Business, Cass' work with local farmers focuses on improving soil health through composting and mulching as well as cultivating new and old vegetables types.

a magic-pudding myth, it would be about this vegetable. A branch is torn from the shrub, the leaves stripped from it and boiled like spinach. The bare stick can then be simply stuck in the soil and in a month it will have produced enough new foliage for a new meal.

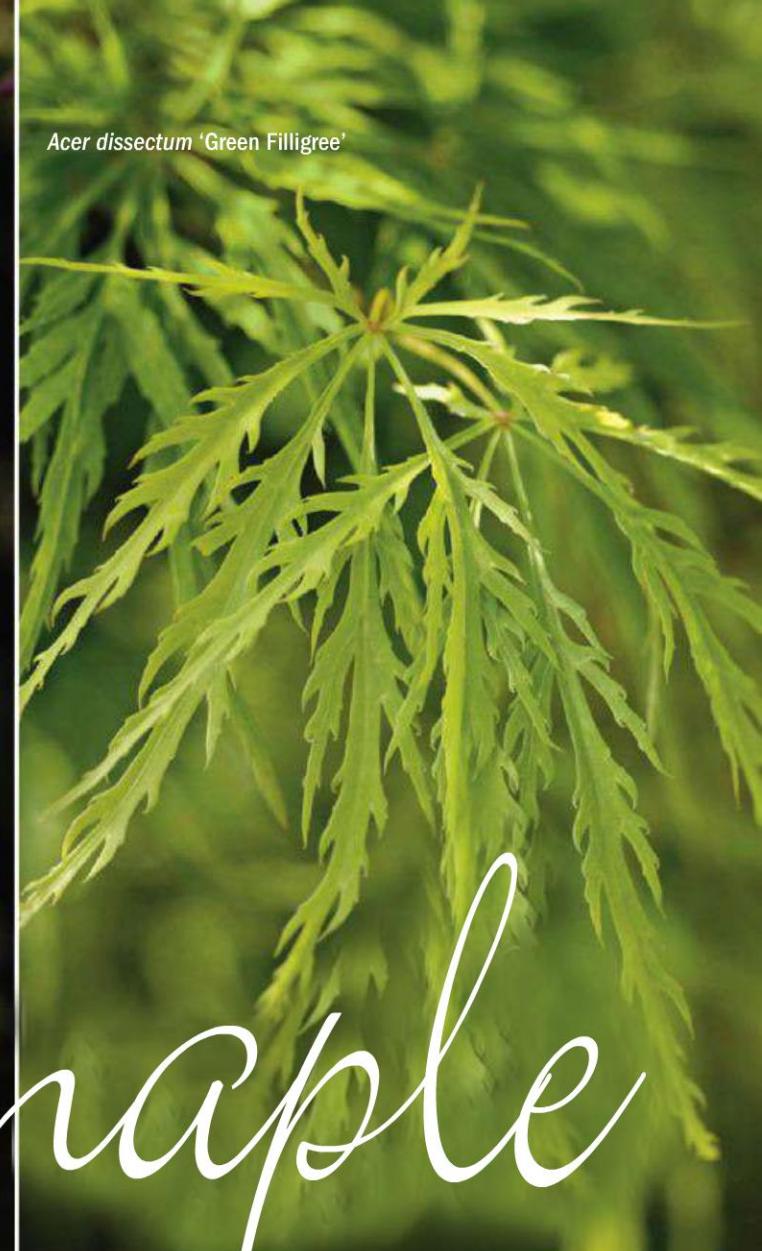
Despite being the ultimate in low-maintenance food, *lau pele* slipped from the Samoan diet over the last 20 years as traditional foods were replaced by cheap imports. The

reintroduction of *lau pele* is therefore a significant step forward.

While other traditional foods and different vegetables are being trialled, every second week more local people become aware of organic produce and its value, both to growers and consumers. The 30 farmers Cass works with, all on farms certified organic by the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia, are raising a new, sustainable future for this Pacific paradise.

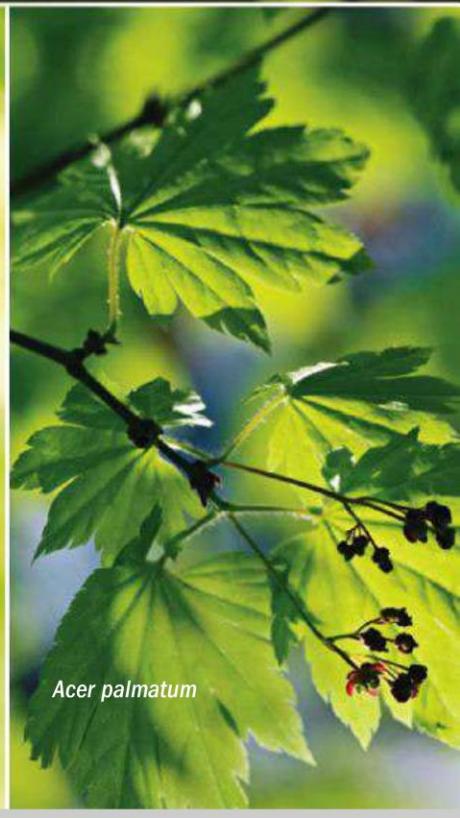
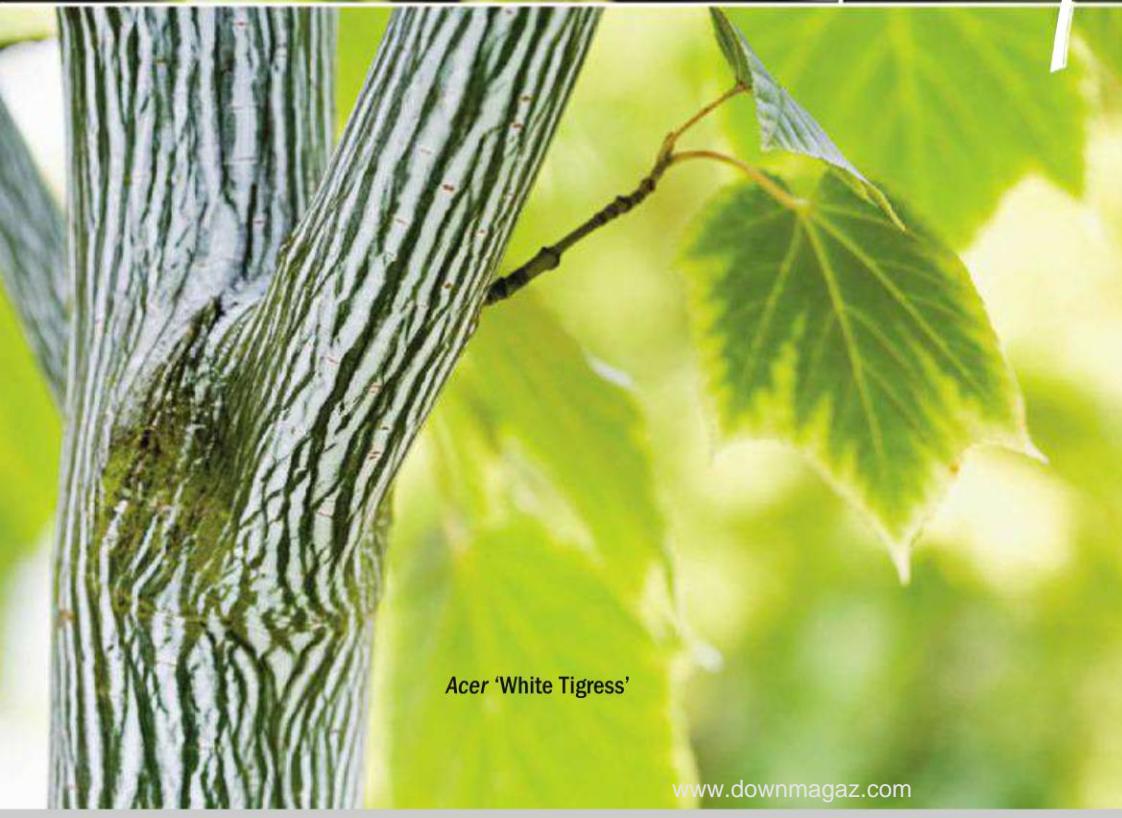


Acer japonicum 'Vitifolium'



Acer dissectum 'Green Filligree'

The maple





From the elegance and grace of the Orient to stately forests of burnt umber in North America, this diverse group of trees undoubtedly produces the most impressive displays of deciduous colour you can have in the landscape.

Acer palmatum 'Beni Kawa'



Maples in the wild literally define the colours of autumn and, here, create high contrast with this silver birch.

Nothing can compare to the grace of a weeping maple in full colour. Whether it's the draping burgundy foliage of *Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Inabe Shidare', the flaming red winter bark of *A. palmatum* 'Sango Kaku' or the fresh lime green of some of the *dissectum* group, the maple creates a statement of tranquil beauty like no other. Although clearly prized for their foliage, the maple genus also contains trees grown for their hard timbers and that precious golden liquid, maple syrup. Their bark can also be quite a feature, ranging from patterned to plain, textured to smooth and pale silver to brilliant red, giving enduring winter pleasure when spectacular autumn leaves have fallen.

3 good reasons to plant Maples

Bark

It's not all about the leaves. The coral-like stems of 'Beni Kawa' bark (page 107) form a network of fine branching and look fantastic planted in a small grove to create a mini-forest of upright red canes.

Flowers

Rather insignificant flowers are born in clusters in spring with the exception of a few like *Acer negundo* var. *violaceum*, the male plants of which bear showy, pendulous magenta flowers. These are followed by very interesting winged seedpods called samaras, that can travel far from the plant – and bring great delight to young children – due to their helicopter-like flight through the air.

Leaves

From the bold open palmate leaves seen in the Canadian flag to the closed pinnate ones of *Acer negundo* or the maple ash, the many varieties of maple display a marvellous array of leaves. The majority of these put on an extraordinary show of colour from budding through to autumn.

The science of autumn colour

Shorter days and cooler nights reduce levels of chlorophyll (responsible for the green pigment), bring on changes in sugar levels and increase carotene (yellow) and anthocyanins (red/purple) to produce those amazing seasonal hues.

Most popular species

Japanese maple or *Acer palmatum* Probably the most popular, this group of maples originate in China, Japan and Korea. Leaf shapes vary from the typical palmate leaf (like spreading fingers) to deeply lobed or lace-leaf types. They're relatively slow growing and are the most popular choice for pots and the art of bonsai. While it has five sub-groups, *A. palmatum* can generally be divided into two major sub-groups, *palmatum* and the filigree-leaved *dissectum*. 'Bloodgood', which holds its crimson foliage throughout summer, and 'Kigiri Nishiki', with pink-edged leaves, are stand-outs in the *palmatum* sub-group. In the other major sub-group, *A. palmatum dissectum* 'Bronze' is a knock-out, with spidery leaves turning burnt orange in autumn.

Snakebark maple or *Acer davidii* The brilliant shallow fissures of pale grey that striate the khaki-coloured trunk of this handsome 10-metre-tall tree provide lasting interest. Its leaves differ from the traditional palmate shape, being oval and mid-green, changing to bright yellow then red in autumn. Another striking form of 'Snakebark' is the weeping *Acer* 'Esk Flamingo', with mottled pink and cream foliage.

Fullmoon or Downy maple (*Acer japonicum*)

This maple has an upright growth and distinct silvery white hairs that appear on the new growth. It is quite slow growing and needs reliable moisture to avoid leaf scorch. The cultivar *vitifolium* (page 106) gets its name from the similarity of its leaf to the grape or *vitis* vine. It's a five-metre-high tree that has deeply lobed leaves and brilliant scarlet autumn colouring.

Red maple or *Acer rubrum* These make great summer shade trees and even better avenue plantings with their pyramidal habit and rapid growth. The North American natives can reach over 20-metres high but with many smaller cultivars on the market, you can still enjoy them in a medium to small yard. One of the more heat-tolerant cultivars 'October Glory' has brilliant scarlet new growth and autumn colour, while the more columnar 'Bowhall' has shades of yellow/orange with a tall but narrow habit at only five metres across.

Cultivation

Maples perform and colour up best in the cooler regions of Australia, generally south of Sydney and Perth, in the mountainous regions and Tasmania. Maples need a free-draining soil and reliable moisture, especially throughout the warmer months. Plant in a protected spot away from prevailing winds and incorporate composted organics prior to planting. Feed in spring with a slow-release fertiliser and prune when dormant in late autumn or winter, being careful not to hinder their graceful natural habit but more to remove dead wood.

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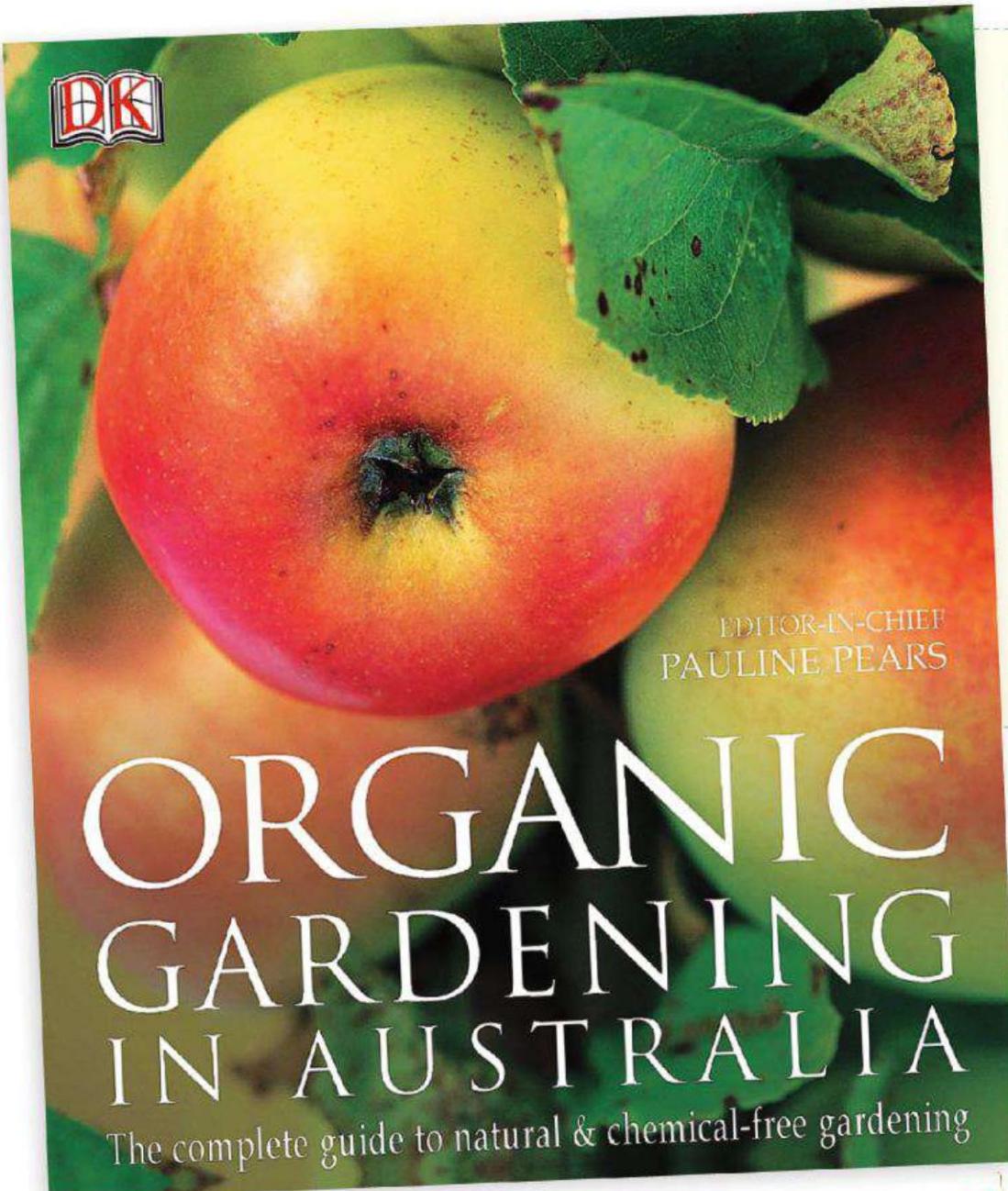


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No-fuss orchids

Only weeds are easier to grow and even that might be flattering the weeds. You can literally drop one of these on the ground and it'll grow from there. By Geoffrey Burnie

They're called crucifix orchids because of the shape of their flowers or Epidendrums if you want to get technical. In the wild, they grow in open, sunny grasslands in South America, which is probably why they're so tough and hardy in gardens. The plants grow as erect reeds, held up by long, thin prop roots and the more sun you give them, the sturdier they grow. In shade, they become lanky and inclined to sprawl. They definitely do best and flower longest in frost-free areas but the odd, light freeze won't hurt them. If you get more than that, grow them in pots brought undercover on the coldest nights.

The most commonly seen types have orange or scarlet flowers but if those colours don't suit you, there're also numerous fancy hybrids in a huge range of colours including pinks, purples, mauves and whites. They're just as easy to grow as the old orange and red forms that you sometimes see in neglected gardens, happily flowering away with no care whatever. Near where I live in coastal Sydney, there's a big patch of them

growing on an outcrop of rock in the street. In full blazing sun, they're never fed and the only water they get is rain. I have them in my own garden, planted in a hole in the concrete driveway. Having established them by pushing two stems I'd acquired into the ground, the only thing I do to them is thin them out when they get too untidy.

If you want to grow them in pots, a wide shallow container will give you a good display or try them in a hanging basket. Orchid potting mix is the ideal medium.

Their natural climate is rainy in the warmest months with less and less rain as the weather cools down. If you water them, follow that pattern. One dose of controlled release fertiliser in mid-spring should do or water them over occasionally with soluble or liquid fertiliser.

The only problem with Epidendrums is finding them. I've never seen them in a local nursery so you'll have to mail order them from a specialist grower. Or, if you see them in a garden, knock on the door. Most people will give you a few pieces and that's all you need to start your own display.

Photos: Chris L Jones

Where to buy

We shot this story at Coachwood Nursery on the New South Wales Central Coast. They don't sell directly to the public but do trade at plant fairs and shows, which are listed on their website at www.coachwoodnurseries.com.au or contact proprietor Ruth Donelly on 0437 399 896. **Where else to get them?** Dark Star Orchids, PO Box 114 Bowraville, NSW 2449, www.darkstarorchids.com.au

Epidendrums live on rain, and flower every day of the year



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J Rupp

Australia's Open Garden Scheme is a non-profit organisation that promotes the enjoyment of gardens and gardening by opening many interesting and inspiring private gardens to the public.

All gardens are open 10am–4.30pm, unless otherwise noted. Adult entry \$6, unless otherwise noted. Children under 18, free to all gardens.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Casita del Mar, 19 Dam Rd, Wombarra, 5–6 March 2011

Garden rooms with hedge and water features are terraced with stone walls in this large secluded garden on the Illawarra escarpment. Australian species have been blended with exotics for year-round interest. Spectacular ocean views through Blackbutt forest.

Tanbella, 20 Beltana Rd, Pialligo, ACT, 5–6 March 2011

Outstanding modern garden, incorporating Liquidambers, Pin oaks, Persimmons, Cedars and Chinese elms. Landscaped lake and a stroll garden with bridges, waterfalls and dense Casuarina and Metasequoia planting.

Ewenton House, 1 Blake St, Balmain, 2–3 April 2011

A lush foliage terrace garden overlooking the harbour features Victorian-era plants and grand historic house. See stunning Gingers, Bananas, Strelitzias, Yuccas and Day lilies.

Plant Fair at Bellevale, 191 Black Range Rd, Yass, 2–3 April 2011, 10am–4pm, \$8

Gardener's heaven – a wonderful opportunity for passionate gardeners to find that perfect plant as well as talking with specialist growers. Held at Bellevale, a property established in the early 1800s, with rolling lawns and rose

Australia's Open Garden Scheme

gardens on the hilltop site command stunning views of undulating country.

Tamie Fraser, Moree, 2–3 April 2011, \$8

Join Tamie Fraser, president of Australia's Open Garden Scheme, at one of Moree's most interesting gardens, 'Cooma'. Tamie will give an informal talk at 11am on Saturday and 2pm on Sunday.

Birnam Garden, 31 Birnam Grove, Strathfield, 21–22 May 2011

This foliage garden of diverse areas and strong geometric shapes features clipped hedges, segmented paving outlined in Mondo grass, a wall fountain, outdoor living area and beautifully integrated modern sculpture.

QUEENSLAND

Soul Garden Retreat, 98 Macdonald Rd, Palmwoods, 12–13 March 2011

A subtropical oasis in a forest setting. Foliage includes Bromeliads, Gingers and Cordylines. A tropical-fruit orchard, stone walls, dams with water lilies and cool meandering forest walks.

The Lost Gardens, 822 Cedar Rd, Belli Park, 19–20 March 2011

Spectacular examples of unusual and rare plants: Dombeya, Kapok, Bolusanthus, Mexican tree fern, Elephant apple, Raffia palm, Black bamboo, Climbing Mussaenda.

Dallas Kampe's Tropical Garden, 15 Sunrise St, Mt Cotton, 25–27 March 2011

Tropical garden embracing plantation-style Queenslander and Balinese temple. A boardwalk winds beneath rare Palms sheltering lush, colourful Cordylines, Crotons and large Bromeliads. Urns, a red mosque-like folly, a waterfall and ponds plus topiary.

Roberta's Garden, 92 Hausler's Rd, Pittsworth, 9–10 April 2011

Country garden with several distinct areas: lawns contrast with perennials, Clematis and massed roses including Delbard cultivars.

Kitani, 29 Mount Margaret Dve, Rangewood, 16–17 April 2011

A serene entry under a shady fig opens out onto a driveway and paths. The plantation-style house and tropical pool are surrounded by Foxtail palms, Bamboo, Cycads and Bromeliads. An imposing canopy of Royal, Bismarck and Macarthur palms.

Midori, 49 Simpsons Rd, Elanora, 23–24 April 2011

Temperate and subtropical greenery is a stunning contrast to Asian-influenced red accents in a cool and tranquil hillside garden. Includes water features, pergolas, Wisteria arbour, pebble paths and elegant bridges.

Sommer garden, 61 Vyner St, Pinjarra Hills, 7–8 May 2011

Grand garden with sweeping lawns leading down to a stunning central lake. Distinctive plantings provide texture, contrast and colour. Balinese pavilion bordered by Frangipanis, bridges across gullies and timber seating.

Tamalili, 119 Ore Close, Gordonvale, 28–29 May 2011

Garden sanctuary on a gentle sloping block, one third of it natural forest. Fusion of tropical ornamental and fruit trees, flowers, foliage and shrubs beside a small spring-fed creek.

Cairns Designer Gardens, 21–22 May 2011, \$6 per each or \$25 for 5:

5 gardens created by local architects and designers for themselves and their families, each with a very different approach.

● Matt Kingsley's Designer Garden, 11 Lily St, Cairns North

● Hall Street Garden, 2 Hall St, Edge Hill

● Mainwood Garden, 48 Hibiscus Lane, Holloways Beach

● Prowse Garden, 11 Granadila St, Holloways Beach

● The Nursery House, 15 Satellite St, Clifton

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Art in the Garden: Trevelyan Street Garden, 38 Trevelyan St, Wayville, 12–13 March 2011, \$8

See how art and sculpture invigorate this robust family garden with a relaxed contemporary feel.

Tupelo Grove, Bradbury Rd, Mylor, 26–27 March 2011

Plant enthusiast's garden, wholesale nursery and total-water recycling system. See an exciting collection of unusual trees, shrubs and perennials including sensational Salvias.

Wyndbourne Park, Mawson Rd, Forest Range, 26–27 March

Fascinating structured garden conceived on a grand scale. Herb garden, perennial borders, Blue gum walk, Laburnum tunnel, courtyard with stone water feature and much more.

An Engineer's Garden, 12 George St, Hawthorn, 2–3 April 2011

Retired engineers have used their eye for detail to create a garden featuring an eclectic mix of mature and fruit trees, hardy exotics and tough natives.

Taylor's Chateau Clare Winery Garden, Taylors Rd, Auburn, 10 April 2011

A young Mediterranean garden features extensive mass plantings of hardy native and exotic plants and trees overlooking endless lawns. Oysters, wine and sculpture.

Majewski Garden, 3 Fergusson Ave, Craigburn Farm, 30 April–1 May 2011

A fresh approach has resulted in striking plant combinations highlighting colour and drama in a climate-compatible Australian garden.

History Trail: Colonel Light Gardens & the Adelaide Hills, 1 May 2011

Explore SA's garden history from heritage-listed Colonel Light Gardens and self-driving to the Adelaide Hills to 2 more gardens. Bookings essential: www.opengarden.org.au or (08) 8248 0077, \$35 including morning tea.

Kinclaven, 56 Waverley Ridge Rd, Crafers, 7 May 2011

Historic garden with statues, fountains and an oval lily pond. Trees dating from the 1880s, spectacular perennial borders, Cactus garden, lawn terraces and a Wisteria arbour.

Stephanie Alexander Schools: Elizabeth Downs, Woodend and Bridgewater Primary Schools, 15 May 2011

Kitchen Garden Foundation schools showcase the kitchen gardens used to teach students to design, build and maintain vegetable gardens on organic principles.

TASMANIA

Creating a Country Garden: Rosedown, New Norfolk, 6 March 2011, \$45

Brenda and Ian Triffit's inclusive workshop on design, planning, budget, selection and maintenance. BYO picnic. Bookings essential at (03) 6429 3175 or www.opengarden.org.au.

Tino Gets into the Vegie Patch, Italian Style, Carnevale Vineyards, Brighton, 20 March 2011, \$75 incl lunch & wine

Tino Carnevale's 3-hour workshop on soil, planting, pest management, crop varieties and rotation and harvesting at the family vineyard. Bookings are essential: (03) 6429 3175 or www.opengarden.org.au.

Locally Delicious@Wychwood, 80 Den Rd, Mole Creek, 3 April 2011, \$7

Taste Meander Valley wine, beer, produce, cheese, small goods, organic honey, gelati and more in Wychwood's autumn garden.

Jaribo, 38 Larooma Rd, Hawley Beach, 17 April

Native garden, orchard, vegies and caged berry garden beside the Rubicon Estuary.

Crawleigh Wood Garden, 51 Underwoods Rd, Nicholls Rivulet, 16–17 April

An arboretum of Gondwanan rainforest species, plus deciduous trees in autumn colour with mountain and valley views.

Glenlusk Gardens, 37 Glenlusk Rd, Berriedale, 1 May

Unusual Rhododendrons and Maples, an oriental bridge spans a natural creek and deciduous trees give depth to broad vistas.

VICTORIA

Plant Fair at Bolobek, 370 Mt Macedon Rd, Macedon, 5–6 March 2011. \$12

40 local and interstate exhibitors in one of Australia's finest gardens. Established a century ago by the Syme family, it was refined and enhanced by the late Joan Law-Smith.

Dig It: Mornington Community Garden, Pine Reserve, Mitchell St, Mornington, 19–20 March 2011

Self-sown annuals and creatively used recycled materials at a productive community garden run on organic principles by residents. Composting demos at 11am, 1pm & 3pm.

Carmody & Baird Farmhouse, 390 North Redesdale Rd, Redesdale, 26–27 March 2011

Drifts of perennials, beds of roses, natives and succulents surround a striking house and swimming pool overlooking the Campaspe River.

Barfold, 233 Ivenes Lane, Milawa, 9–10 April 2011

A driveway flanked by poplars, broad lawns, Dahlia beds and a rose arbour with fountain.

Cloverly, 5A Fordholm Rd, Hawthorn, 16–17 April 2011, \$7

Terraced garden features box and topiary plus knot garden and well-sited sculpture.

Ridgefield, 58 Boundary Rd, Coldstream, 30 April–1 May 2011, \$7

Robert Boyle's formal design is softened by plantings of roses, shrubs and drought-tolerant perennials. Colonnaded terraces and courtyards link house, garden and vineyard.

Tall Timbers, 3560 Yarra Junction–Noojee Rd, Piedmont, 1–2 May 2011

A landscaped creek and pools linked by cascades feature in a retreat where exotic plantings merge with native forest.

View Street garden, 1 View St, Alphington, 7–8 May 2011, \$8

An extraordinary and breathtaking 6-acre garden occupying a spectacular riverside position. Large stone-walled terraces hold beautifully grown perennials.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

(nothing in March)

Congella, 30 Orange Valley Rd, Kalamunda, 16–17 April 2011

A labour of love for over 40 years, Congella features mature Camellias, Roses and Salvias and the stunning Wheel of Fire tree.

Roseworthy, 181 Walnut Rd, Bickley, 7–8 May 2011

Well-established garden with winding paths, stunning heritage and tea roses, shady trees, large camellias, climbing roses and topiary.

Sheila's Garden, 45 Millbrook Close, Jarrahdale, 14–15 May 2011

Recycling, sustainability, productive plantings and self-sufficiency feature in this garden on a bush block. Jarrah windbreaks, Citrus trees, vegies and a large Macadamia.

The Embroidered Garden, Lot 2909 Lennard St, Herne Hill, 8 May 2011

Quince and Silver pear, Roses and perennials, espaliered fruit trees, an olive grove and a vegetable parterre in this homestead garden.

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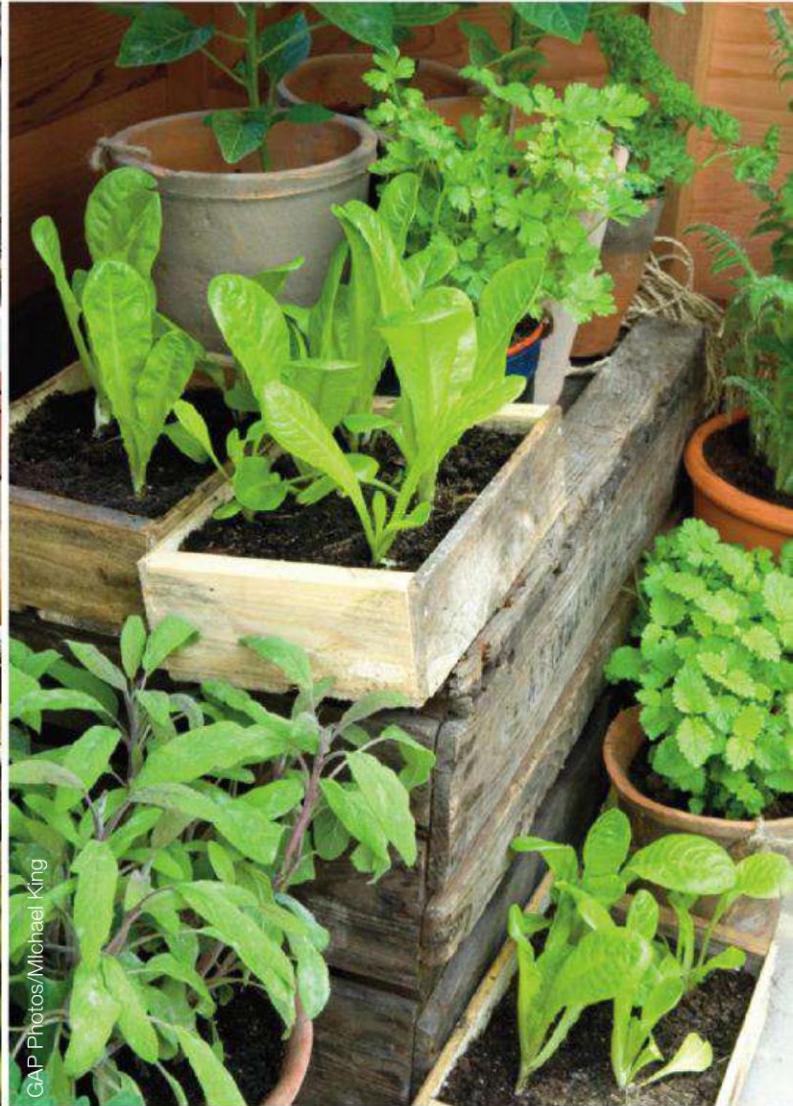
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13 pages of tips, techniques and experience from our team: **Lisa Habermann, Marcelle Nankervis, Helen Placanica, Deryn Thorpe and Geoffrey Burnie.**

Autumn idea

For establishing plants, think of autumn as a second spring. Everything gets away fast in the season's pleasant weather and you'll love being outdoors, too.



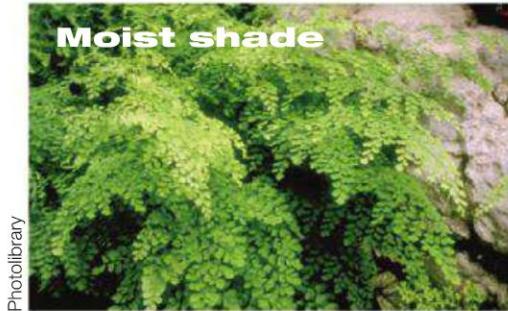
Types of shade

Deep or full shade is an area that receives no direct sun and has low light intensity through most of the day. Areas are often narrow spaces with high walls and overhanging buildings.

Suitable plants: Liriope, Star jasmine, Hosta, Spotted laurel (*Aucuba*), Cast-iron plant (*Aspidistra*).

Dry shade is found beneath trees with aggressive roots. If plants are evergreen or the canopy dense, the area may also have deep shade. These sites are challenging as tree roots take most of the nutrients and water from the soil. Roots make it hard to dig planting holes and plants have difficulty establishing before

Shady gardens



There are myriad factors to consider when choosing plants for your garden, including the degree of light and shade it receives. While plant labels provide information on suitability for sun or shade, they do not address the level of shade. Before planting anything, note the path of the sun over your garden and how it changes with the seasons. Planting conditions also change as neighbouring plants grow and new buildings or fences are erected nearby.

tree roots invade their root zone.

Suitable plants: *Lomandra 'Tanika'*, Clivia, *Dianella*, Mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria*), Bromeliads

Light or open shade has no direct sun but plenty of bright, reflected light. It is often open to the sky but walls, hedges and structures block direct sunlight.

Suitable plants: Kangaroo vine (*Cissus*), Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) and Virginia creeper (*P. quinquefolia*), *Philodendron 'Xanadu'*.

Moist shade suits plants that require constantly damp soil.

Suitable plants: Maidenhair and other ferns, native violet, Natal paintbrush (*Scadoxus puniceus*), Mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*), Parlour palms (*Chamaedorea elegans*)

Filtered or dappled shade is cast by open trees and sunlight is filtered through a light canopy.

Suitable plants: *Plectranthus argentatus*, *Thomasia solanacea*, Bears' breeches (*Acanthus*), Rengarenga lily (*Arthropodium cirratum*).

Semi or part shade has two to six hours of sunlight a day. Many plants that perform well in full sun will grow well in these conditions.

Suitable plants: Sacred bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), Camellia, Hydrangea, Azalea



Dry shade

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Solutions

- Reduce deep shade beneath trees and shrubs by thinning out branches to open the canopy so more light reaches the ground.
- Paint surrounding walls a light colour or use mirrors to reflect available light.
- Use potted plants under trees in dry shade or choose shallow-rooted plants
- for problem shade areas like Bromeliads or the tough varieties above.
- Install physical root barriers to aid plant establishment.
- In dry shade areas, apply wetting agents to root zones and spray foliage of plants with liquid fertiliser and seaweed solutions to feed plants and limit fertiliser access to invasive roots.

Starting a compost heap

A compost heap is an easy project that recycles garden and household waste to create rich, water-saving organic matter you can add to your garden beds.

How to do it:

Step 1. Mix green garden waste and household vegetable scraps. Clip soft garden material into smaller pieces. Use the lawnmower to vacuum and finely shred fallen leaves.

Step 2. Add animal manure, organic pellets or blood and bone fertiliser.

Step 3. Add a dry component to help the green matter break down. Use straw, shredded newspaper, torn-up pizza cartons, sawdust or old potting mix.

Step 4. Keep the mix moist, but not wet, and allow oxygen to circulate through it by turning over regularly or layering the green and dry components.

Step 5. Have at least two heaps operating at the same time: one ready to use almost straight away; and the other slow cooking for future use.

Tip: Keep vermin away by breaking down vegetable matter in a mini-compost or worm farm first.



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5 steps to planting success

Autumn is a great time to plant and transplant many garden perennials. The weather is mild and plants usually have an opportunity to establish themselves before any adverse weather arrives.

1 Prepare the soil prior to planting. Add composted manure and organic matter to the area and work it through. It's important to enrich the soil your plant is growing into.

2 Water the area the night before and the potted plant that morning in preparation for planting. If you forget to water the garden, don't do it at the last minute as you should never work wet soil.

3 Dig a hole to fit your plant. It should sit in the garden at the same depth it was sitting in the pot. If it's too deep, add a handful of soil underneath. Too shallow, get that spade out and dig a little deeper.

4 Gently tease the roots from the root ball. You should be able to just see a couple of centimetres of healthy white roots emerging from the potting mix. A light massage should allow the roots to break out and grow into the surrounding soil without too much disturbance.

5 Plant and backfill with the enriched soil and some controlled release fertiliser. Press down firmly but don't compact the soil. Water well and mulch.

Unwanted fruit

You may have planted it or you may have inherited it, but either way you have a fruit tree laden with fruit that you do not want or use. It's time to make a decision.

1 Use it – eat it fresh and preserve the rest.

2 Fallen, rotting fruit is a haven for pests and diseases – always rake up and dispose of.

3 Remove it. If you don't want it, it's OK to pull the tree out. There are plenty of other trees that will provide ornamental value without unwanted fruit.

The composting process can generate enough heat to kill spores or germs of plant diseases and also weed seeds and bulbs. But this only happens if the heap is big enough. If you pile up one cubic metre of material in one go, and you turn it weekly, it's safe to include weeds and diseased material.

COOL LETTUCE

Lettuce is a popular salad staple and autumn is a good growing time.



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The best varieties for cooler months:

- **Cos:** an upright lettuce that can handle temperature extremes and does well in winter.
- **Darwin:** a compact tropical variety of loose-leaf light-green lettuce.
- **Narromar:** medium to large hearting lettuce with dark green leaves, ideal for winter.
- **Rouge d'Hiver:** an heirloom French variety, whose name means winter red. It has buttery red-tinted leaves, is suited to cool climates and is frost-tolerant with good regrowth.
- **Winter Density:** a compact Romaine-style lettuce similar to Cos, Winter Density is an old English variety with dark green leaves. It is frost-tolerant and early to crop.

Tropical gardeners will have more success growing lettuces from April to July. Choose open-leaf forms like Cos and Oakleaf to avoid rotting problems with hearting lettuces, such as Iceberg and Great Lakes.

Spring bulb basics

It's time to get busy planting spring-flowering bulbs.

Growing requirements

All bulbs require friable and free-draining soil otherwise they rot. If your soil is heavy, add composted organic matter, raise the garden bed or grow bulbs in containers. Choose a spot where bulbs will receive about six hours of sunlight a day. Because the bulb itself contains the embryonic flower as well as all the energy and nutrients required for growth, fertilising at the time of planting is not necessary but the incorporation of composted organic matter into the soil promotes healthy root growth.

Water in well when planting and only water again when the soil dries out.

How deep?

As a rule, large bulbs are planted about three times as deep as the bulb is long. Smaller bulbs should be planted about twice as deep as they are long.

How to plant

Only plant firm and plump bulbs; discard any that are damaged, soft or mouldy as they invariably fail to grow. If you can't plant bulbs straight away, store them in a paper bag in a cool, dark place and label the bag to avoid confusion with edible bulbs such as onions. If spot-planting bulbs to infill gaps in a perennial garden or to create casual drifts under deciduous trees, dig a planting hole to the required depth and insert the bulb pointy-end up and then backfill. On the other hand, ranunculi and anemones are planted claws and pointy-end down.



Good idea

Invest in a **long-handled bulb-planting tool** if you're planting a large quantity. It'll save you time and back pain. If planting in a cluster, dig a hole to a spade's depth, enrich the removed soil with composted organic matter and then back fill. Set the bulbs in place about twice their width apart, then cover with the remaining soil.



PLANT IN MARCH

Bluebells (*Scilla*), Fritillaria*, Grape hyacinths (*Muscaris*)*, Lachenalia, Snowflakes (*Leucojum*)

PLANT IN APRIL

Anemones, Crocus*, Jonquils, Daffodils, Ranunculi

PLANT IN MAY

Peruvian lily (*Alstroemeria*), Freesias, Hyacinth*, Snowdrops (*Galanthus*), Tulips*

*Only suitable for cold-winter areas

BULBS FOR A

WARM CLIMATE Plant in April/May
Baboon flower (*Babiana stricta*), Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum*), Sparaxis, Society garlic (*Tulbaghia fragrans*), Tritonia.

Tip!

Insert bamboo stakes to delineate the clump. Some bulbs take a couple of months to show; it's easy to accidentally damage them by overplanting.

The slopes & plains of inland Australia

To many, it's the best time of year in inland Australia – blue skies, mild days and lots to look forward to in the garden. The first frosts are weeks away but before then, the still-warm soil welcomes new plants and the slightly cooler days encourage quick growth.



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Camellia



Photosynthesis

Mite

A tiny mite that attacks Camellia leaves causes a disfiguring brown stain to appear in a line on the leaves. It's called Camellia Tea Mite. Although you can't do anything about the leaves already damaged, you can stop it from spreading to new ones. Spray with a horticultural mineral oil, paying attention to new leaves. It's not a once-only treatment, so keep an eye on plants and reapply if you see signs of return.

Autumn roses

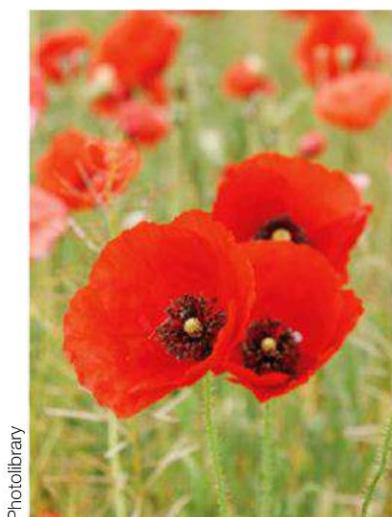
If you cut back roses before the middle of February, you'll create a flush of beautiful new blooms by the end of March. It's called summer pruning and although it's not as severe as the job you do in winter, it's not just a light trim. You can take off between a third and a quarter of the size of the plant – the taller the rose, the more you can take off. Pruning stimulates new growth, which results in flowers six weeks later. After pruning, give the bushes a long, deep soaking and a dose of rose food.

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Flanders poppies

The Flanders poppy is a symbol of Anzac Day. We can't have the blooms then in the southern hemisphere, but we can sow them on Anzac Day. They're easy to raise: just clear the area where you want them to grow, which must be in full sun, rake smooth and level, then thinly scatter the seeds. Lightly rake over and water in. Keep the spot lightly moist until germination occurs. Once the little plants are up, a weekly watering should keep them going. Their only downside is they're rather rank in habit and have a weedy look until they bloom. An alternative is the Shirley poppy, a hybrid bred from Flanders poppies that unfortunately doesn't come as just red.



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Take note

Autumn colour is always better when the soil is moist.

From February, give a fortnightly, long, deep soaking to deciduous trees and shrubs prominently placed in the garden. Good colour comes when overnight lows fall below 7°C and following days are sunny and cool.

The Mediterranean zone of south western & southern Australia

As days start to cool in autumn, it's time to pay attention to the ravages of summer, fertilise the garden and reapply wetting agents. Replace plants that did not survive summer with drought-tolerant Mediterranean species or local natives.



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Save your stone fruit

Shot hole and leaf curl are common diseases on stone fruit in this region but by the time you see the problem, it's already too late to treat it.

Leaf curl of peaches and nectarines causes leaves to thicken, blister and distort with pink tinges from July to December. Excessive early leaf fall is common. The fungus that causes it survives as spores in microscopic crevices on the tree. Spray with copper oxychloride in autumn at 90% leaf fall or just before the first leaves appear in spring. If trees are heavily diseased, spray at both times.

Shot hole especially affects plums and apricots but can be found on all stone fruit and almonds and is caused by a bacterium. In early spring, greenish-yellow spots on the leaves dry out, resulting in surface holes. Fruit can also become spotted, cracked and pitted. The bacteria affects trunks and branches, causing surface cankers, dying shoots and discolouration of the wood underneath. Cankered twigs should be cut off and destroyed, and secateurs disinfected. Bacteria overwinter in twig lesions, so control shot hole with copper oxychloride or cupric hydroxide sprayed four times. Start when leaves begin to fall in autumn, repeat at 25%–50% leaf fall and again when leafless. Lastly, spray at bud swell. The copper sprays also treat canker.



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© NSW



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Growing garlic

Plant garlic cloves 3–4cm deep in rows 25–30cm apart in March and April in soil improved with compost. Apply a controlled-release fertiliser after planting and liquid fertilise every 3 weeks once leaves appear. Garlic is shallow-rooted and in dry weather on sandy soils needs daily watering. Stop watering about 3 weeks before harvest as leaves start to brown. Harvest 6–9 months after planting when leaves are dying but still slightly green. Inside, bulbs should be big and creamy, rather than white.



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Temperate eastern Australia

As soon as the weather cools to comfortable, take that as your cue to return to planting. For newly bought plants, autumn is as good as spring for getting themselves established and growing. The new season also brings a new range of plants to tempt you.



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Cut down to size



TIBOUCHINAS

Tibouchinas are shrubs with rich purple flowers anytime between February and April. Left alone, they can grow into small open trees. If you don't want that, prune them back to any desired size. Straight after bloom is a good time, but only do that if your winters aren't frosty. If they are, prune in spring when frosts have finished.

Arrggh! ONION WEED

There's no sure-fire way to kill onion weed.

Persistence and more persistence is your only hope, and the only hope is to keep it under control and minimally offensive. Glyphosate weedkiller (Round-up, Zero, Erazee) will kill the parent bulbs if sprayed or painted onto the leaves. It will not kill any of the tiny bulblets around the base of the parent bulb. These will come up. When they do, spray them promptly. Unfortunately, they don't all come up at once so keep an eye out and respray on sight. The sooner you spray a newly emerged leaf, the greater the chance that bulblets will not have time to reproduce.



Denis Greville

The gall of them!

Got swollen stems on citrus trees?

That's a sure sign of Citrus gall wasp and now's the time to get rid of it. Cut off the section containing the gall and, as the insect only attacks fresh young stems in spring, it's only the outermost galls you have to worry about. Make a little fire in the backyard and burn them. If you can't do that, seal the galls tightly inside a sound plastic bag and leave in the hot sun or pour boiling water over them and soak.

Lawn forlorn?

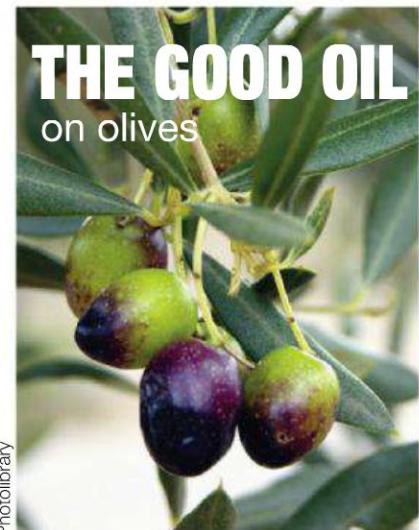
Around this time, a dead patch on the lawn can appear and expand every day. The culprit is often armyworm, a voracious caterpillar. Lay a piece of cloth over the line between good and damaged grass at sunset. Early next morning look underneath. If it's armyworm, you'll see them on the cloth. Spray the boundary of the damaged area and a metre into the good grass with Success or Dipel, which contain a bacterium that only infects caterpillars.



Photolibrary

Southern Australia

Autumn promises relief from hot winds, but it can take some time for temperatures to drop. Plants can show signs of stress, making them more prone to disease and pest attack so it's a good time to lavish care on them with deep soakings and fertiliser to boost immunity.



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THE GOOD OIL

on olives

TOP 5 PLANTS

for cool Autumn colour



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Ornamental pear



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Climbing appleberry



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Sedum

Maples Plant Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum* cultivars) in suburban gardens or grow them in pots. Keep compact with regular pruning. See page 106.

Ornamental pears are excellent screening plants with glorious autumn colour and wonderful spring blossoms. *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' and *Pyrus calleryana* 'Burgundy Snow' are varieties that grow up to 10m high and 6m wide.

Sedum or stonecrop are hardy perennials which grow up to 60cm tall, thrive on minimal water and produce a blaze of vibrant colour in the autumn. Mass plant for best results.

Climbing appleberry (*Billardiera longiflora*) is an underutilised Aussie native. A wonderful evergreen climber that grows 1–3m high, it produces vibrant purple berries en masse in autumn. Ideal for cooler climates. Plant it in sun or partial shade.

Bulbs produce flowers throughout autumn in pots or garden beds. Try Colchicums, Sternbergias, Zephyranthes, Nerines, Crocus and Lycoris.

Hanging Basket competition...

Coastal & inland subtropics

Autumn is one of the busiest and loveliest times of the year as relief from summer's heat and humidity makes gardening a pleasure. It's time to prune back all that rambunctious summer growth, replenish soil nutrients and mulch garden beds to mitigate the dry winds of the winter ahead.



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Replenish



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Replenish the precious nutrients leached from the soil by heavy summer rains and depleted by vigorous plant growth by digging in composted organic matter or spreading it as a mulch around established plants. Broadcast pelletised animal manures such as Rooster Booster or Dynamic Lifter and mulch the entire garden. Sugar cane mulch is ideal; it's cheap, light, easy to spread and readily breaks down.

Prune

Sharpen pruning gear, glove up and prune unruly bougainvillas. Also cut back summer-blooming climbers such as Allamanda, Stephanotis and Mandevilla.



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Plan now for spring colour

Prepare garden beds now for planting out seedlings from April/May by thoroughly digging soil to one spade depth and mixing in composted organic matter or blood and bone at the rate of about half a cup per square metre. When choosing plants, be guided by what's available at your garden centre. Particularly successful for spring colour in the subtropics are the purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), English (*Calendula*) and French (*Tagetes*) marigolds and Kalanchoe. Further north, plant Coleus, Celosia and Zinnia.

Hungry citrus



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Citrus are gross feeders, requiring 500g of fertiliser per year of the tree's life or up to 2kg for a large mature tree. Apply citrus-specific plant food under the canopy drip line where the tree's feeding roots extend and water in well.

Feed Camellias

Use a fertiliser specifically formulated for these acid-loving plants in early autumn or as soon as new growth buds appear. Apply liquid fertiliser to well-moistened soil to avoid burning the shallow roots and adhere strictly to the recommended doses – Camellias are such light feeders that overfeeding can kill them.

TIP: Don't fertilise thirsty or heat-stressed plants.

New from old

To take hardwood cuttings from your favourite Frangipani, prune a branchlet 30cm long and leave in a cool dry spot until the sap stops flowing. Plant in a pot containing free-draining propagating mix and water well. Water again when dry.

SAVE CITRUS



Denis Crawford

curling of the leaves. The best protection is to spray trees thoroughly with a horticultural mineral oil once a week. For tropical gardeners, the biggest impediment to success is rain. Parent moths usually lay eggs in the evening, so spraying fresh new leaves in the late afternoon is most effective. Don't spray oil if the temperature is expected to exceed 35°C.

Citrus love the tropics but everything that chews or sucks, it seems, loves citrus. One of the most disfiguring pests is the Citrus Leaf Miner, a tiny caterpillar that tunnels its way between the upper and lower surfaces of leaves, causing unsightly silvery trails and, later, the twisting and

Photolibrary



Select a healthy leaf for propagation.



Cut into segments.
Plant in moist seed-raising mix.

Leaf cuttings

Many plants will reproduce themselves from a piece of the plant cut from the parent. In most cases, that will be a short section of stem but, in some species, leaves can also be induced to produce new plants. Succulents, African violets, Streptocarpus and Gloxinias spring to mind. With succulents, all you have to do is insert a section of leaf into a little pot of sandy, seed-raising mix and wait. You can do the same with African violets and the others mentioned above, but these plants also have the ability to make plants from sections of leaf, meaning that one leaf can produce quite a few new plants. Use a blade to cut across the veins on the underside of the leaf. Lay the leaf flat on moist seed-raising mix ensuring that the cut veins stay in contact with the soil. Keep moist and brightly shaded and new plants will form within six weeks.



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Coastal & inland tropics

Keeping pests and diseases in check and rampant growth under control are two of the most pressing jobs as the rainy tropical summer continues. However, the constant warmth and frequent rain has an upside – anything you want more of can be propagated quickly and easily from cuttings.

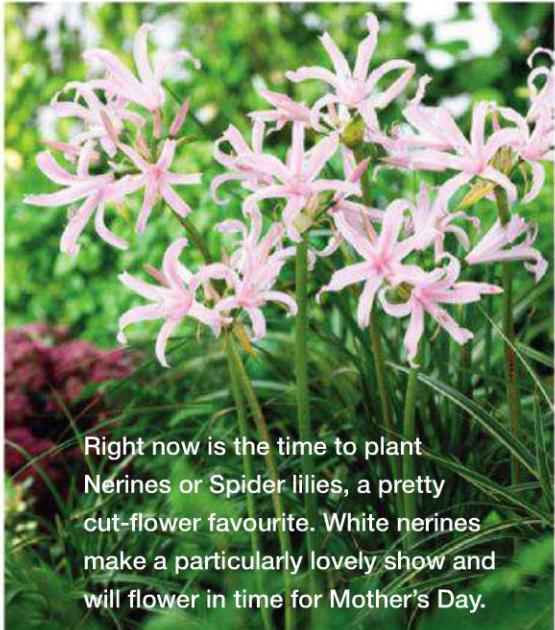
HIGHLANDS, TASMANIA & AREAS WITH COLD WINTERS

Nowhere else in Australia experiences as strong a sense of the changing seasons as the cool regions, most dramatically seen in brilliant displays of autumn colour. In the garden, this is the season of tidying up, planting for spring and considering what to buy bare-rooted in winter.



Photolibray

NERINES NOW



GAP Photos/Visions

Right now is the time to plant Nerines or Spider lilies, a pretty cut-flower favourite. White nerines make a particularly lovely show and will flower in time for Mother's Day.

Indoor plant pick-me-up

Plan an autumn refresher for your indoor plants.

- Remove dead flowers and browned-off leaves.
- Pot up if the plant looks too big for its pot or if roots grow from the drain holes.
- Pop dry pots into a bucket or laundry sink full of water until air bubbles stop.
- Wipe leaves with a white-oil dampened cloth. This stops scale and mealybug as well as removes dust.
- Apply a seaweed solution every month.
- Say goodbye to plants that have had their day. They can be cut up and added to your compost.

FIGHT ROSE LEAF DISEASES

Humid and windy weather can bring on a bad bout of black spot and powdery mildew in roses. Black spot spreads easily and shows up as black spots on leaves (see below right), which then yellow and fall. This weakens the plant, making it susceptible to other pests and disease attack. Powdery mildew appears as a powdery coating on leaves (see below left). Fungal spores spread in humid and rainy conditions, causing stress to the rose and affecting growth. It is spread by wind and water splash. Spray with a rose-specific fungicide and with lime sulphur after pruning in winter. Gather affected leaves and remove. Old diseased leaves left at the bottom of plants can spread the disease. Keep plants strong and healthy by feeding them with a complete rose fertiliser at the frequency directed on the packet and also water them with a liquid seaweed-based product. Sulphate of potash applied once in spring helps roses build resistance to fungal disease and encourages better blooms.

Water roses early in the day beneath foliage.



Photolibray



Photolibray

Tip! Many old-fashioned heritage and Iceberg roses can resist fungal attack. If leaf diseases are a problem, look for varieties with high disease resistance.

Dates for the diary

FEBRUARY

Tasmania

Dahlia, Gladioli and Lily Show

When: 5–6 February, Sat: 2–5pm, Sun: 9am–4pm, \$2

Where: St Ailbes Hall, Margaret St, Launceston

Launceston Horticultural Society,
Jean Roper (03) 6327 1126 or
tony-jean40@netspace.net.au

Queensland

The Annual Begonia Show

When: 26–27 February, 9am–3pm

Where: Auditorium, Brisbane Botanic Gardens Mt Coot-tha, Toowong, Brisbane

The Queensland Begonia Society Inc,
Peter Henderson

(07) 3359 4319

Victoria

2011 State Dahlia Championship Show

When: 26–27 February, Sat: 12:30–5pm, Sun: 10am–3:30pm, \$3

Where: Mt Waverley Community Centre, 47 Miller Crescent, Mt Waverley

The National Dahlia Society of Victoria, Dwight King (03) 9593 1413

MARCH

New South Wales

Goulburn Rose Festival

When: 12–3 March

Where: Goulburn Soldiers Club, 15 Market St, Goulburn, (02) 4821 1159

Victoria

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS)

When: 30 March–3 April

Where: Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, www.melbflowershow.com.au

Annual Autumn Flower Show

When: 5–6 March, Sat: 1–5pm, Sun: 10am–4:30pm

Where: Watts Pavilion, Kyneton Showgrounds, Kyneton
The Kyneton Horticultural Society Inc, Hugh Fraser (03) 5422 1943

Tasmania

Dahlia, Gladiolus and Floral Art Show

When: 11–12 March, Fri: 1–6pm, Sat: 10am–4:30pm

Where: Hobart Town Hall, 50 Macquarie Street, Hobart
Hobart Horticultural Society, Margaret Bennett (03) 6244 3825

APRIL

Queensland

Wondai Autumn Garden Expo and Orchid Society Annual Show

When: 16–17 April

Where: Wondai Sportsground, Bunya Highway, Wondai
www.wondaigardenexpo.com

Victoria

The Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show (MIFGS)

When: 30 March–3 April

Where: Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens

www.melbflowershow.com.au

New South Wales

Chrysanthemum & Flower Show

When: 30 April–1 May, Sat: 1–5pm, Sun: 9am–3pm

Where: Mirambeena Hall,

19 Martha Mews, Lavington

Albury Wodonga Chrysanthemum and Garden Club Inc,

Claire Lowe (02) 6021 2421

Tasmania

Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show

When: 29 April–1 May, Fri: 1–6pm, Sat: 10am–4:30pm, Sun: 10am–4pm

Where: Hobart Town Hall, 50 Macquarie Street, Hobart
Hobart Horticultural Society, Margaret Bennett (03) 6244 3825

Autumn Show

When: 30 April–1 May, Sat: 2–5pm, Sun: 9am–4pm, \$2

Where: St Ailbes Hall, Margaret St, Launceston

Launceston Horticultural Society,
Jean Roper (03) 6327 1126 or
tony-jean40@netspace.net.au

The 7th Collectors Plant Fair

When: 16–17 April

Where: Woodgreen, 25 Powells Rd, Bilpin

Beth Stokes (02) 4888 9262

www.collectorsplantfair.com

MAY

New South Wales

Zygocactus and Hoya Show

When: 26–28 May, Thurs: 9am–7pm, Fri: 9am–5pm, Sat: 9am–2pm

Where: Bass Hill Plaza Shopping Centre,

753 Hume Hwy, Bass Hill

The Epiphyllum and Hoya

Society of Australia,

Ted Clapson (02) 4655 2540 or

Kathy Frazer (02) 4647 1921

Your autumn vegetable planting guide

VEGETABLE	TROPICAL AREAS	SUB TROPICAL AREAS	MILD WINTER AREAS	COLD WINTER AREAS
Artichoke	✓ before April	✓ before April	✓ from April	✗
Asparagus	✓ from May	✓ from May	✗	✗
Beans	✓	✓	✗	✗
Beetroot	✗	✗	✓ before April	✓ before March
Broad bean	✓ from April	✓ from April	✓ from May	✓ from April
Broccoli	✓ from March	✓ from March	✗	✓ before March
Brussels Sprouts	✗	✗	✓ before April	✓ before March
Cabbages	✓ from February	✓ from February	✗	✓ before April
Capsicum	✗	✓ before April	✗	✗
Carrots	✓ from February	✓ from February	✓ before April	✓ before March
Cauliflower	✗	✗	✓ before April	✗
Celery	✗	✗	✓ before March	✗
Corn	✗	✓ before March	✗	✗
Cucumber	✗	✓ before April	✗	✗
Eggplant	✗	✓ before April	✗	✗
Golden shallots	✓ from March	✓ from March ✓ before April	✗ ✗	✗ ✗
Leeks	✓ from April	✓ before April	✓ before May	✓ before April
Lettuce	✗	✗	✗	✗
Melons	✗	✓ from March	✗	✗
Okra	✗	✓ from March	✗	✗
Onions	✗	✗	✓ from March	✓ from April
Parsnips	✓ from March	✗	✓ before April	✓ before March
Peas	✓ from March	✗	✗	✗
Potatoes	✗	✗	✓ before March	✗
Pumpkin	✗	✓ from April	✗	✗
Silver beet	✗	✗	✓ before April	✓ before March
Spinach	✓ from April	✓ from April	✗	✗
Swede	✗	✗	✓ before April	✓ before March
Sweet potato	✓ before April	✓ before March	✗	✗
Tomato	✓	✗	✗	✗
Turnip	✗	✗	✗	✓ before April
Zucchini & Squash	✗ ✗	✓ from April ✓ before April	✗ ✗	✗ ✗

Helps stop the spread of germs



Introducing the new Dettol No-Touch Hand Wash System.

A revolutionary way to help stop the spread of germs. It automatically senses your hands and dispenses soap that kills 99.9% of germs. Plus it's enriched with moisturising ingredients. All to help keep your hands healthy.

Autumn pests

By Denis Crawford

An abundance of fruit, flowers and new growth is pure temptation to bugs, but careful spraying and pruning can ensure your plants survive the onslaught.



Spined citrus bug

The adult spined citrus bug (above) is plain green with horned shoulders while juveniles (below) sport graphic markings.



What to do

Hands on

Pick off bugs by hand or shake them into a container of soapy water or vegetable oil. Alternatively, dispose of them in a sealed plastic bag. Wear gloves and protective eyewear as they can squirt a foul-smelling liquid when disturbed. Repeat this process until most of the bugs have gone. Look for egg masses on twigs (eggs are about 1mm in diameter) and squash them.

Spray

No product available to home gardeners is specifically registered against spined citrus bug on citrus.

Autumn gum moth

What is it?

A common native insect found on eucalypts across southern Australia, including New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and south-western Western Australia. Caterpillars can cause serious damage to young trees, but rarely damage older ones with mature foliage. Major infestations can result in tree defoliation. Caterpillars feed mostly at night, and rest together during the day inside a shelter formed by webbing leaves together at the tips of branches. Caterpillars may be found any time from late summer through to early spring.

What to look for

Skeletonised leaves.

Leaves with only the mid-rib remaining.

Clusters of eggs or groups of small caterpillars.

Curled leaves with caterpillars inside.

Spined citrus bug

What is it?

A native pest of citrus, especially lemons and mandarins, in eastern Australia. Both adult bugs and their nymphs pierce the rind of citrus fruit causing drying and brown staining of segments, premature colouring and fruit drop. Bug populations are at their worst during late summer to autumn in southern states, but are worse in spring and late summer in Queensland.

What to look for

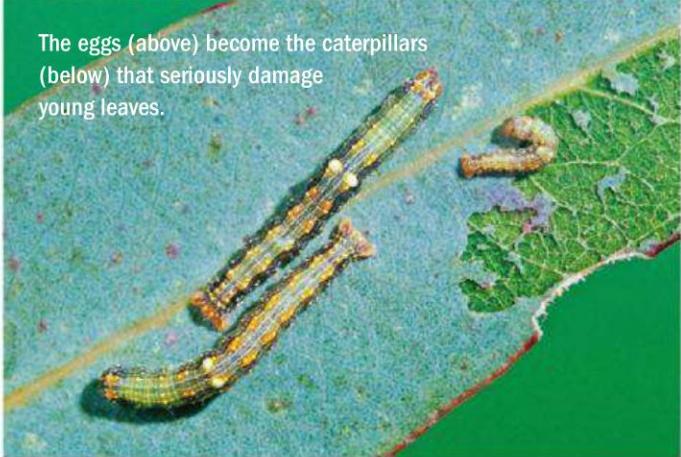
Spiny bugs and their nymphs on fruit. Look carefully as they will try to hide on the other side of the fruit. Rind damage. Gum oozing from pierced fruit. Fruit drop.

Encourage the presence of parasitising wasps by minimising toxic chemicals in your garden and growing flowering plants. Insects to control pests are available from www.goodbugs.org.au

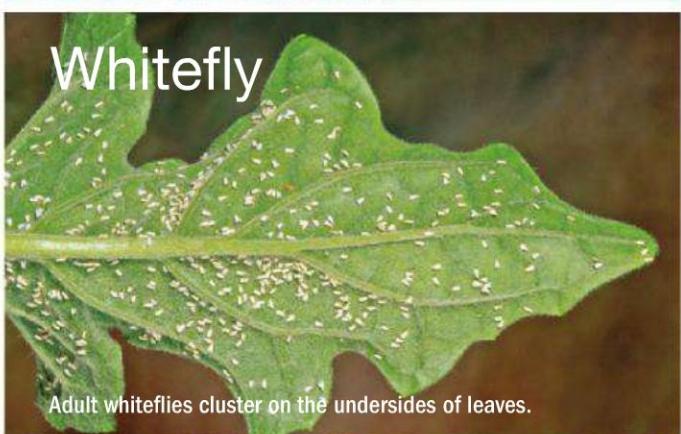
Autumn gum moth



The eggs (above) become the caterpillars (below) that seriously damage young leaves.



Whitefly



Adult whiteflies cluster on the undersides of leaves.



Whitefly larvae (left) are effectively parasitised by Encarsia wasps.

What to do

Hands on

- Prune off groups of leaves with eggs and small caterpillars on them.
- Prune off webbed leaves.
- Fertilise and water young trees to encourage regrowth.
- Autumn gum moth eggs are parasitised by tiny wasps. Encourage the wasps by minimising the use of toxic chemicals in the garden and grow flowering plants near your trees so they can find nectar.

Spray

Anything registered for use against caterpillars on ornamentals is suitable. Try a biological insecticide such as Dipel or Success. Be sure to follow instructions and note that it may take a few days for the caterpillars to die.

Whitefly

What is it?

Despite its name, this common pest is not actually a fly. Whiteflies are sap-sucking pests related to aphids, scale insects and mealybugs. They are found all year round except during the depths of winter and dry hot summers. Whiteflies attack many plant species including ornamentals such as chrysanthemum, gerbera and hibiscus, and vegetables such as cucumber. Both adults and juveniles suck plant juices, causing yellow mottling on the upper surface of leaves. They exude excess fluid as honeydew, which supports the growth of unsightly sooty mould that blackens leaves.

What to look for

- Clouds of tiny white moth-like adults fly up when disturbed.
- Oval shaped green scale-like insects (juvenile whitefly) on the under surface of leaves.
- Sooty mould on leaves.
- Mottling of leaves.

What to do

Hands on

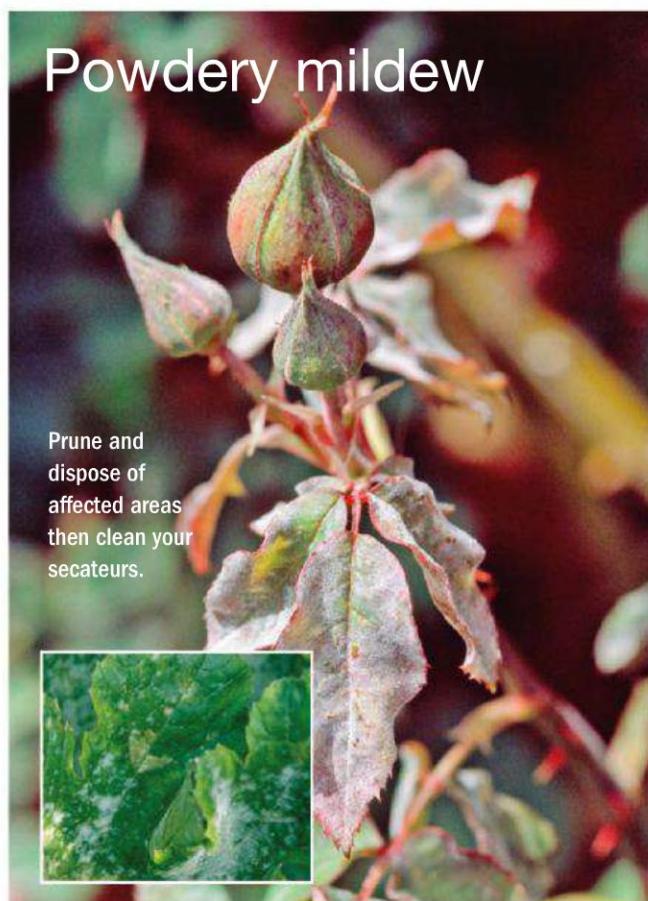
- Remove weeds such as nightshades in which they can breed.
- Use yellow sticky traps to detect whitefly invasions.
- Remove and destroy older leaves that are heavily infested with whitefly nymphs.
- Release commercially available Encarsia wasps.

Spray

Natrasoap soap or petroleum-based spray oil. Insecticides such as Rogor, Folimat and pyrethrins are registered against whiteflies. Some of these chemicals will adversely affect beneficial insects such as lacewings, ladybirds and hoverfly larvae. Be sure to read the registrations before buying.

Autumn diseases

Cooling temperatures and moisture can tyrannise your garden with diseases of decay. Neat pruning, ventilation-wise planting and destroying infected matter all help.



By Denis Crawford

coating over the infected surface.

- Distorted leaves, misshapen flowers.

What to do

Hands on

- Ask your nursery for mildew-resistant varieties.
- Don't overcrowd plants.
- Prune plants to improve air circulation.
- Don't wet leaves when watering.
- Prune off severely infected leaves and dispose of them. Clean secateurs with a mild bleach solution afterwards.

Spray

Seaweed solution as a bio-stimulant which may prevent infection. Field trials have shown that a 10% milk solution is an effective control, but milk is not registered as a fungicide. Lime sulphur fungicide or Triforine (registered for apples and pears only). You may need to spray every 7–10 days for as long as the fungus is active.

Rose canker

What is it?

A fungal disease which invades through wounds and pruned stems and canes, particularly those which have been cut flat so that moisture can collect. The disease will not infect a healthy, vigorous, undamaged rose. The plant must be injured in some way for the fungus to enter the plant. Tiny black spores may appear on the infected area, which may burst and spread the disease to other parts of the plant.

What to look for

- Grey/brown discolouration spreading from wounds and/or pruning cuts.
- Dead sunken areas of stems, often with raised callused edges.

What to do

Hands on

- When pruning use sharp, clean secateurs and prune at an angle to allow water to run off cuts.
- When deadheading, cut back to the node. Failing to do so results in dieback to the node, and the resulting dead wood is an invitation to canker spores.
- Prune bushy roses so that stems don't slash each other in the wind.
- Don't injure plants with mowers, trimmers or other tools.

Powdery mildew

What is it?

A very common, conspicuous and damaging fungal disease which is usually at its worst in summer and autumn. It is common on cucurbits, grapes, strawberries, and ornamentals such as roses, gerbera and calendula. The fungus grows best in warm humid weather, and crowded conditions with poor air circulation. Severe infection can weaken young shoots enough to distort leaves and spoil flowers. The fungus can spread very quickly because spores can be carried by wind and rain to land on other plants and cause infection.

What to look for

- White powdery spots which spread and join to form a powdery



- Sterilise secateurs with methylated spirits or a mild bleach solution.
- Prune out all diseased or dead stems well below canker at an angle.

Spray

There are no chemicals registered against rose canker.

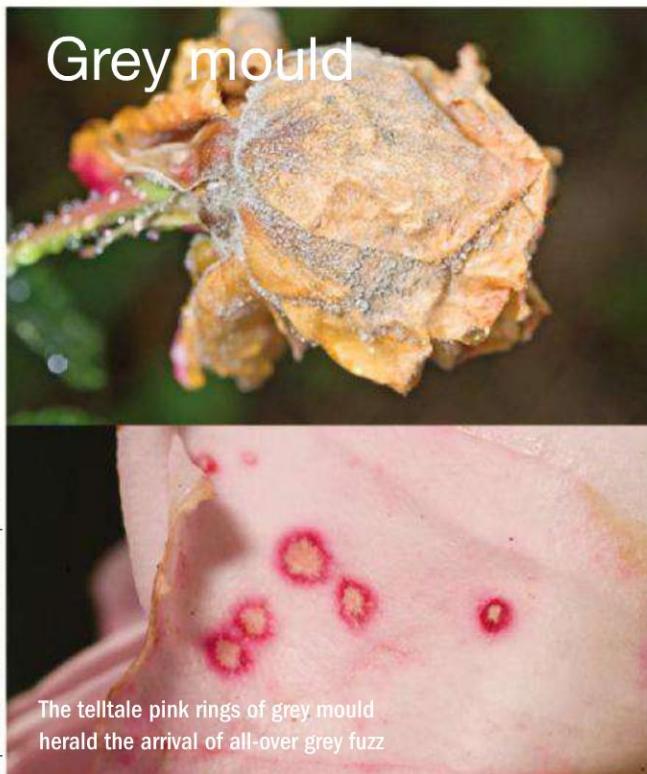
Grey mould (aka Botrytis)

What is it?

A fungal disease which attacks a wide range of plants, and may infect leaves, stems, fruit or flowers. The fungus can invade stems and leaves through wounds like pruning cuts. The disease is favoured by cool, humid conditions and spores are spread by wind and rain. Susceptible plants include pome fruits, berries, grapes, lettuce, and beans. The fungus can infect the flower petals of begonia, carnation, chrysanthemum, cymbidium orchids, and roses. Cankers may form on stems, infected bulbs may rot, flowers decay and fruits rot after harvest.

What to look for

- Different kinds of plants may have different symptoms. A common symptom is the grey fuzzy growth of spore production on infected areas.
- Rose infections begin as distinct pink rings, while petals of orchids have brown blotches, prior to the grey fuzz appearing.
- Brown rot forms at the base of lettuces and on pear fruit.



What to do

Hands on

- Pick up all fallen material, deadhead susceptible plants, and remove infected vegetables immediately after harvest.
- Don't water overhead as splashing water will spread spores.
- Provide good air circulation by spacing plants or pruning appropriately.
- Keep secateurs clean and sterilised.
- Keep your plants healthy, well fed and properly watered.

Spray

Once you see the symptoms the damage is already done, removal of infected material will prevent new infections. Preventing it growing in the first place is the best control. Grey mould is resistant to many fungicides.

Cleanliness is next to godliness: get rid of all infected matter and sterilise your secateurs regularly.



Frog in bloom

Here is a photo of a tiny green frog which appeared to be using one of my roses as an umbrella one showery day during early September. He was quite happy to wait and get "up close and personal" with the camera. As I live in a country area and have quite a large garden, I see a lot of frogs but have never seen one inside a rose bloom before or since.

Yvonne Lavarine, Gin Gin, Queensland

QUESTION

In March this year I purchased a lovely fig tree. I planted it in my backyard and during the winter it lost its leaves and looked as if it was dead. Now it has leaves and 18 figs on it. I've had varying advice as to whether I should prune it or whether I should remove the figs. How should I take care of my fig tree? Also, I was also wondering if these are the fig trees whose leaves Adam and Eve wore.

Lois Morrissey, Strathdale, Victoria

ANSWER

We're presuming yours is an edible fig rather than one of the many ornamental types. Edible figs are deciduous, so losing leaves in winter is normal. There are many different varieties of figs but most sold are of the 'common' variety. These can produce two crops each year, the first towards the end of spring (the crop you refer to) and the later, usually bigger, crop in late

summer or early autumn. If your summer isn't long and warm enough, the second crop doesn't always ripen.

There's no great benefit for the home gardener in removing the spring crop and the only reason to prune the tree is to stop it from growing too tall for you to be able to pick the fruit. To do this, remove branches that grow upwards, preserving those that grow horizontally. Unpruned trees can grow quite large but figs can also be pruned hard to reduce their size.

If you decide to prune the tree, do so straight after you pick the crop. This could be in early summer if you find you're not getting a second crop. If you do get a second crop, then do any pruning in mid-summer but only remove a selection of branches, leaving the others to be pruned the next summer. That way you won't be cutting out too many fruiting branches and you'll still get a good crop.

The likelihood of Adam and Eve using the fig tree as a wardrobe is very high. The fig is found in the Middle East and its leaves have long been depicted as light clothing.

LOVE LOVE LOVE the summer edition of the magazine!

Rebecca Harper, via email

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QUESTION

My roma tomato plant has been fruiting but I can't understand why the fruit has been getting brown bottoms that grow much worse as the fruit ripens, as if it is rotting from the bottom. Are you able to tell me what's causing this? I've placed a Thai basil pot plant next to it for companion planting but I'm not sure if it will help.

Belinda Wicks, Katherine East, Northern Territory

ANSWER

The problem with your tomatoes looks like the start of blossom-end rot. If it is, the brown patch will develop into a blackened sunken patch.

Blossom-end rot is caused by the plant's inability to absorb calcium from the soil, which is caused by erratic watering – the soil goes too dry before wetting or the soil is poorly drained and too wet. Always plant tomatoes and capsicums in free-draining, yet moisture-retentive soil. The ideal is dampness around the roots at all times – not wetness, not dryness. At planting time, work lime or dolomite lime into the soil as this helps supply calcium, but won't solve the problem if watering remains erratic. Plant tomatoes where they won't be exposed to hot drying winds that drive moisture from the leaves.



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I receive *Your Garden* each season when it comes out and I just want to tell you how delighted I am with the new look and that changes you've made in it are absolutely wonderful. I keep turning the pages and there are more and more things to see. It's a wonderful magazine and I'll continue to get it.

Barbara Peridan, via telephone



QUESTION

I moved to South Gippsland in Victoria seven years ago and have built a beautiful garden. I work in aged care and many of my clients have given me cuttings and small plants. I have one that I can't identify and unfortunately the lady who gave it to me passed away. I've checked the internet and every garden book I have to no avail. It's a talking point in my garden and many people slow down to look at it when passing. The plant was only a few leaves when I first got it and I had no idea this is what it would grow into, especially the flower. I'm sure it's not the giant Queensland lily as the flower is an apricot/pink

with some yellow and the leaves are not all that sharp. I do hope you can help me, and thank you in anticipation.

Gayle Davis, South Gippsland, Victoria

ANSWER

The plant is *Beschorneria yuccoides*, a member of the Agave family from Mexico. As you've found, the plants form dense expanding clumps but they are not sharp and spiny like other members of its family. When an individual plant flowers, it slowly declines and dies but is replaced by numerous small plants that appear round its base. The clumps can become quite large over time.

QUESTION

Are you able to identify this tree? It is growing up near Mossman in North Queensland.

Marion Larsen, via email

ANSWER

It's very unusual and it's most likely *Maniltoa*, also known as the handkerchief tree because of the way the new leaves hang limply. *M. browneoides* comes from New Guinea but there's also a native species from Queensland, *M. lenticellata*. The difference between the two is the way the 'handkerchiefs' form: in the New Guinea species, they're produced in tight clusters, whereas in the native species the clusters are more loosely formed. In both species, the new leaves are light in colour and pendant in appearance. I've not seen one in the flesh so can't say for sure which is shown in your picture. If it's in the bush, it's likely to be the native but if in a garden, it may be the New Guinea species.



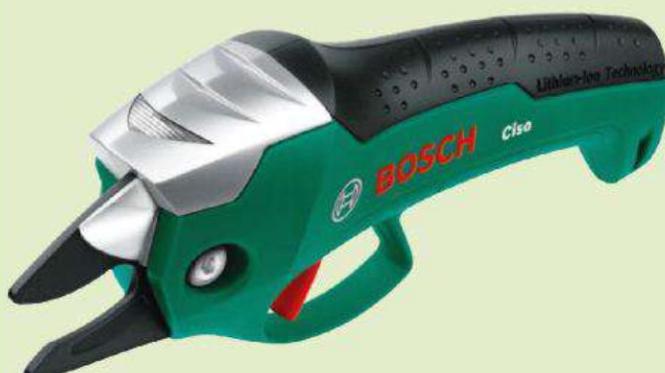
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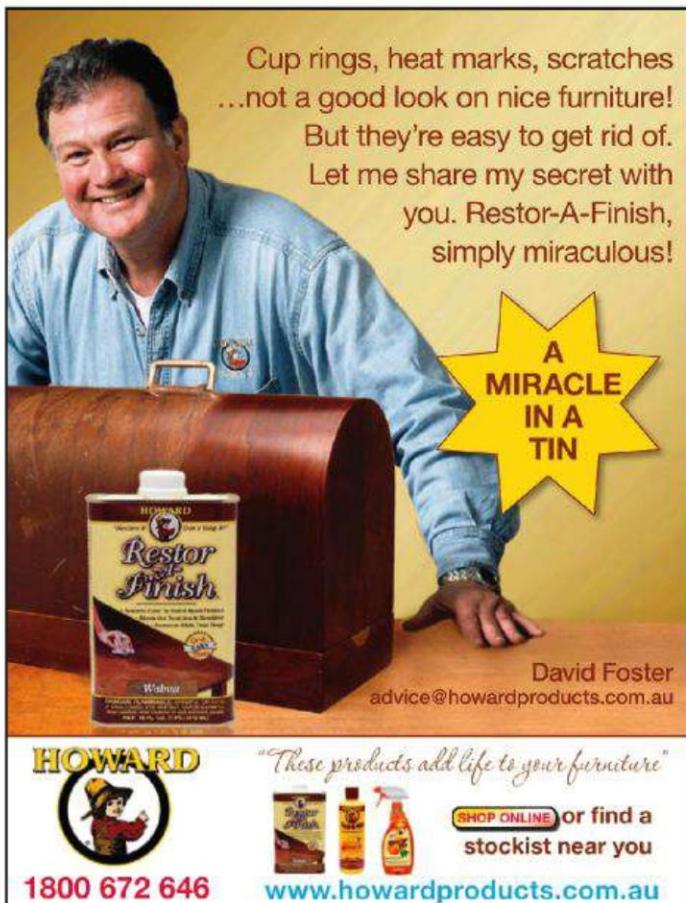
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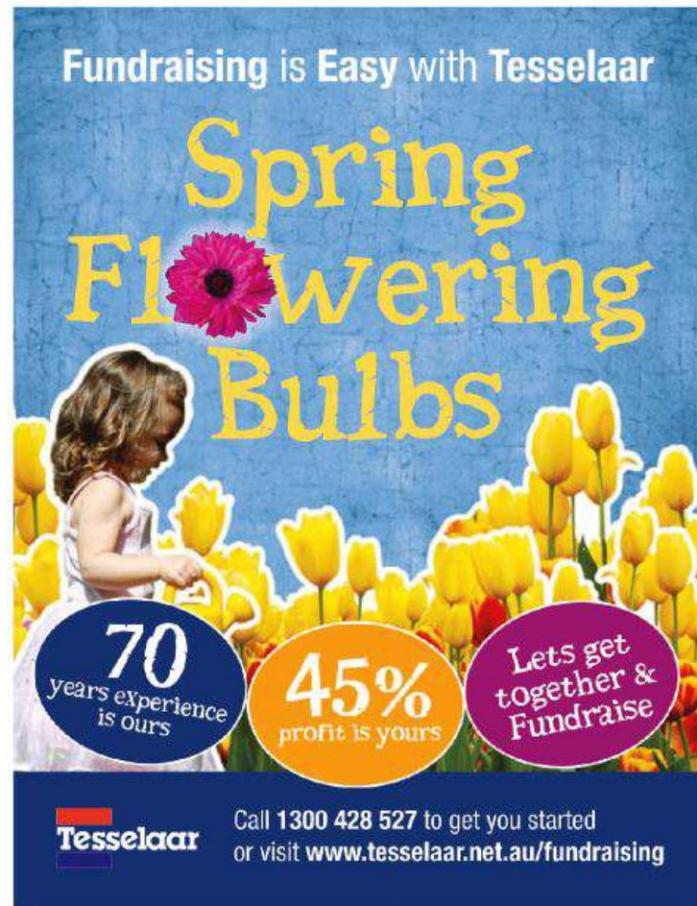
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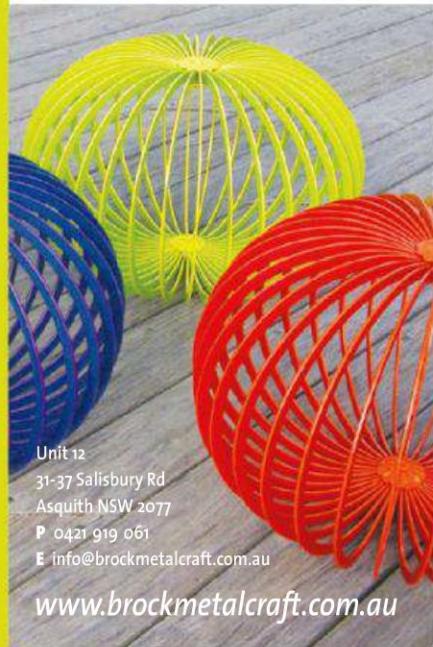
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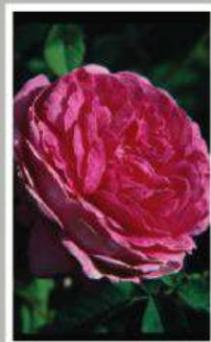


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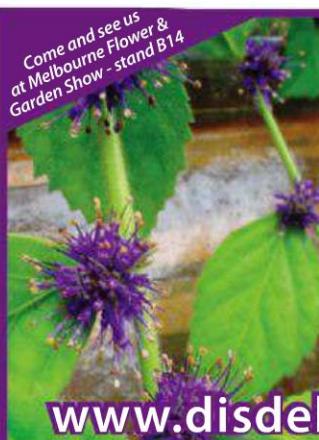
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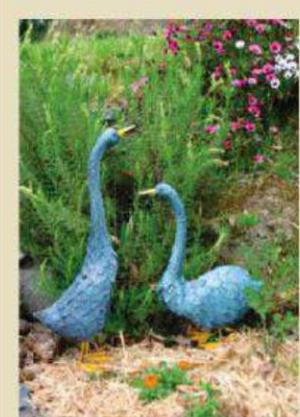


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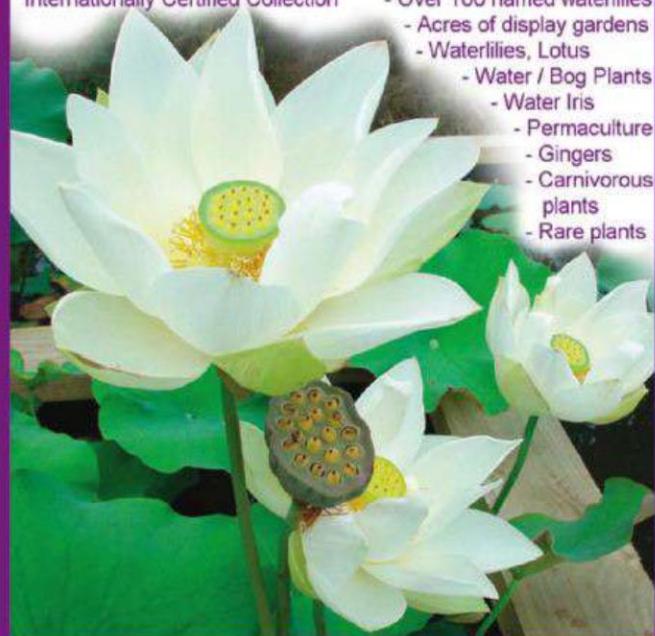
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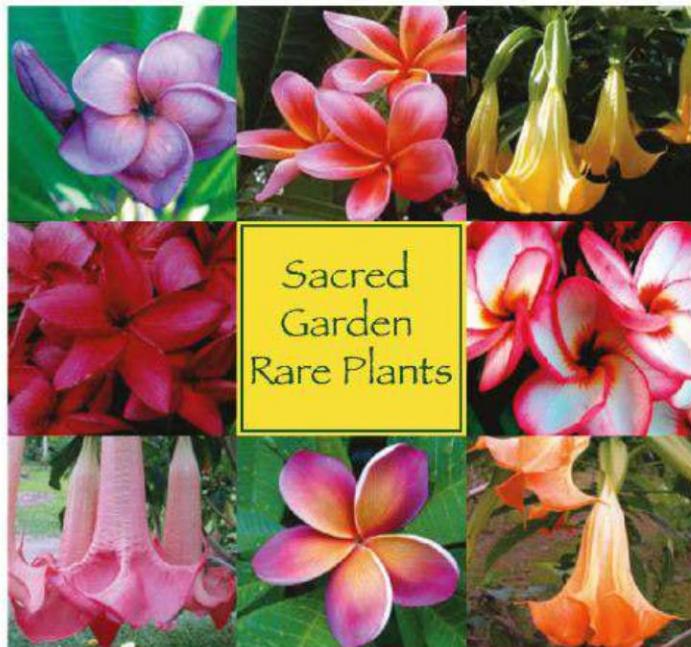


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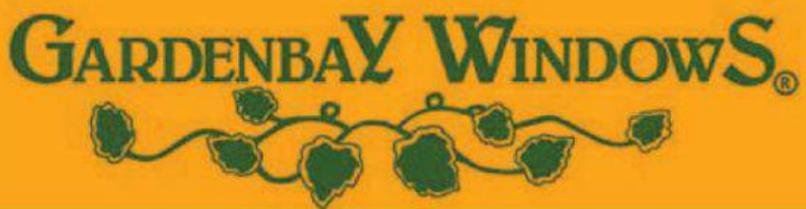
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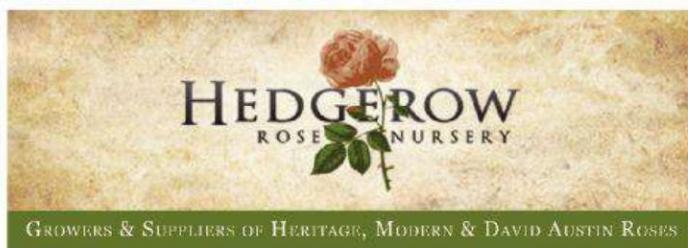
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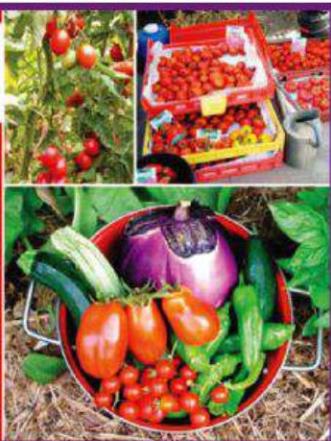
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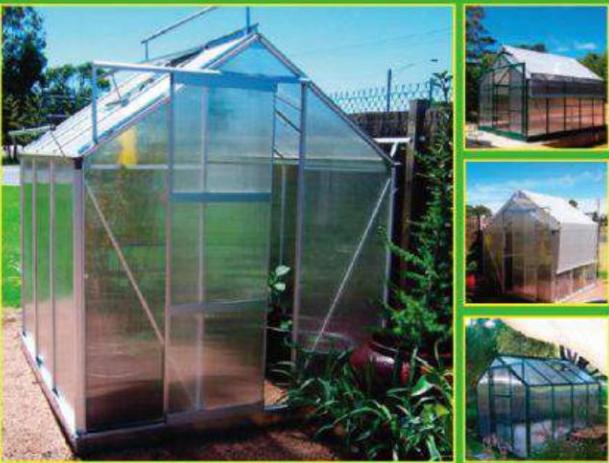
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"Since I got the Arthritis Relief Bracelet, the pain I used to suffer is now almost NIL. My friends are both benefiting from wearing their bracelets, after I recommended it to them." A. M., Dorset



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"I have been wearing my bracelet for about 3 weeks now and find a significant lessening of the pain from my arthritic hip." P. P., Glos.



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"Since wearing my bracelet, I have been free from the back pain I had suffered for years. Many thanks and congratulations on producing an excellent product." J. P., Essex



"Since I received my bracelet a couple of months ago, the pain in my back has disappeared. My husband and I are so impressed we are buying one for his cousin, hoping for the same good results." W. B., E. Yorks



"I have arthritis in my spine, hips, knees and feet. I wore the bracelet over the weekend and felt some relief. Then last night I put the bracelet around my painful foot. About two hours later I got up off the chair, which usually takes some time and, without thinking I stood up on my left foot and I realised that the pain had gone. Not only that, but I could wriggle my toes! With thanks." S. W., Derby



"On receiving the bracelet, I put it on my wrist immediately. Nothing really happened for about 12 days, until I noticed a slight easing of my acute pain. The following day the knee pain eased further and, as the days passed, the pain DISAPPEARED! I have worn the bracelet continuously for about 18 months and have had no recurrence of the pain since. ASTONISHING!" C. L., Somerset



"I am delighted that the sharp pains in the knuckles of both hands are now almost a thing of the past. I am so glad." A. B., Oxon



"Thank you for my bracelet. I have only worn it for one week and I am completely free of arthritic pain." M. S., West Midlands



"Literally within hours of putting on my bracelet, the pains in my leg and back were reduced and now I am able to walk without a stick for short distances. My husband is astonished and now would like one for himself." S. O., Somerset



"I have suffered from arthritis in my hands, knees and toes for over 15 years and I have tried everything. Nothing has ever given me relief like I've had since wearing the Arthritis Relief Bracelet – it's an absolute godsend! I couldn't believe it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart." L. M., Yorks



"In the past 30 years of having arthritis in my feet, ankles and toes, I've taken all kinds of pills and tablets to no avail. Specialists have told me I have to live with it. Okay, so I have to live with it, but not being able to walk properly causes other pains. But since wearing the two bracelets you sent me on my ankles, I am walking better than I have done for years. I cannot believe it, they are doing me so much good. Thanks again." A. W., Essex

Magnetic therapy is now recognised by the UK's National Health Service



"I received my bracelet a few days ago and must tell you I am delighted. Within a few hours I could feel my pain fading and now after a couple of days I am pain free. Unbelievable. I have suffered from chronic pain in my feet and legs for years. With my heartfelt thanks." R. S., Yorks

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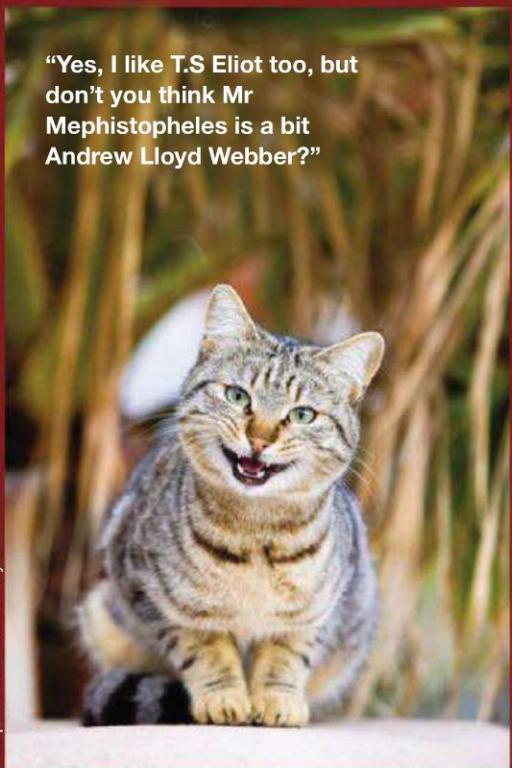
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THE NAME GAME...

All photos: Photolibrary



"Yes, I like T.S Eliot too, but don't you think Mr Mephistopheles is a bit Andrew Lloyd Webber?"



"Really? Do I look like a 'Brutus'?"

I have a dog called Barry. Barry Crocker Spaniel. Until recently, I believed that he had the best pun-based name in the park. Until I met a bloke with a whippet. Named Good. C'mon people, the 80s? Devo?

Such musings led to the question: do pet names – as in those we give our moggies and mutts, as opposed to our significant others – follow the vagaries of fashion as children's do?

As anyone who has ever been in a park, only to see a concerned person with a leash in one hand and bag of excreta in the other rushing by yelling, "Tallulah Belle, come back here", will tell you, the answer is a resounding yes.

In fact according to Margaret Hennessy owner of Sydney dog emporium, Dogue (dogue.com.au), there's hardly a Rex, Lucky, Champ, Lady or Patch to be seen these days. The death rattle of Latin has also seen the practical demise of the most famous of dog names, Fido or trust.

"Over the past decade or so, we've seen a shift away from traditional dog names

towards more popular human names. Even young children who were often once behind inventive names like Fluffy are now driving this trend," says Hennessy.

Milly, Molly, Mandy

Insurance giant, protectyourbubble.com, found that the most popular pet and baby names were overlapping with greater frequency than ever before. Company spokesman Stephen Ebbott told the *Daily Mail*, "It's getting to the point where naming a child will get harder and harder as parents struggle not to give their kids the same name as their dog. It's understandable that dog owners agonise over the name of their new puppy as they would a new child."

Surveying 80,000 pet owners who'd brought home furry friends over a 12-month period, protectyourbubble.com found that 21% of respondents believed naming a pet was as hard as naming a child and that one in 20 people took the name of their dog so seriously they changed it after a few weeks, feeling that it didn't suit their character".

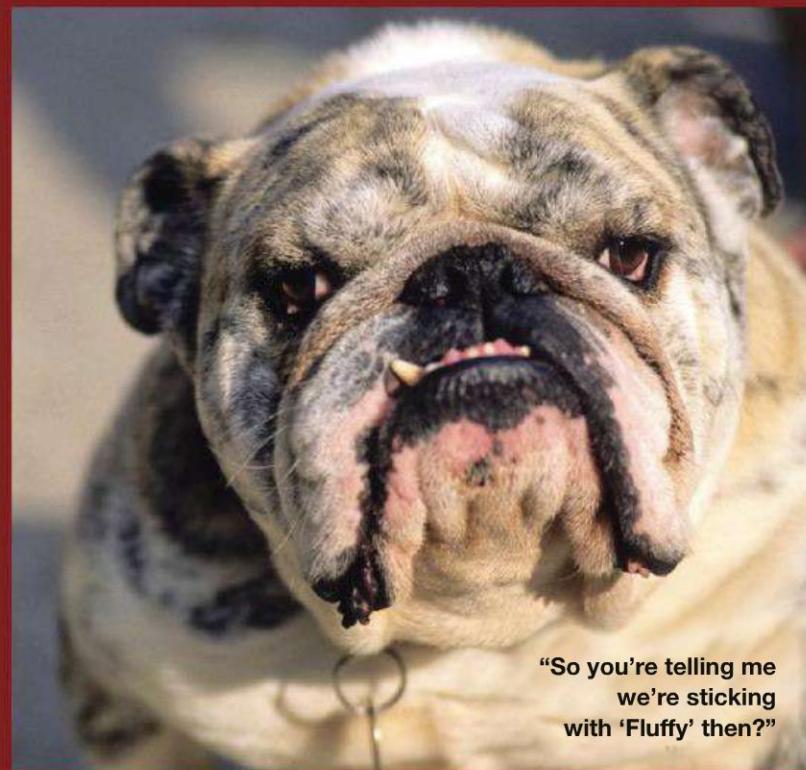
What's in a name?

The more traditional among you may believe this issue is a storm in a water bowl, but according to onomastician, Leonard Ashley, an English professor at Brooklyn University, it's actually rather revealing. "It may seem silly to discuss pet names," he told the *San Francisco Examiner*, "but it's not trivia. It's human behaviour. Mankind names things and names show the psychology behind it all."

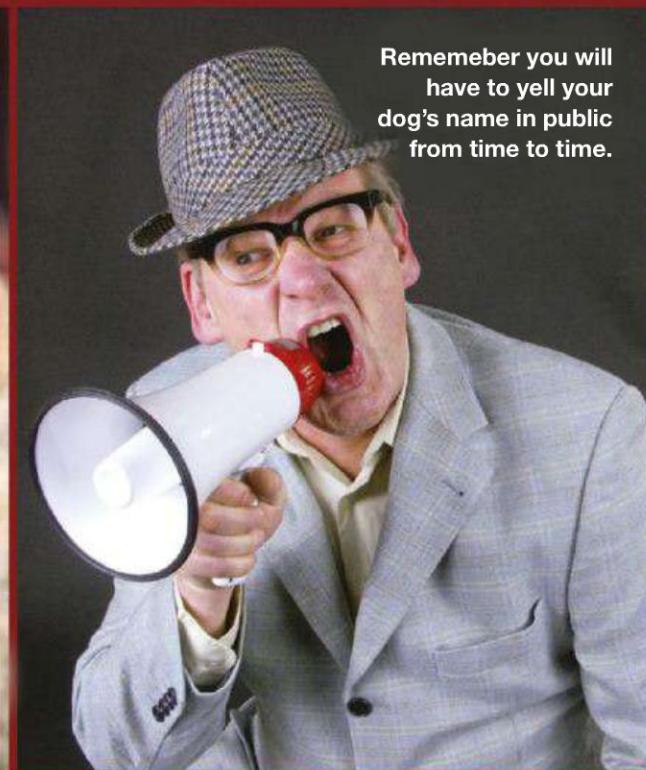
Commentators and pet owners attribute this psychology to a simple principle with a fancy name: anthropomorphism – ascribing human form or attributes to a being or thing that's not human. Like a cat.

With fewer Australians having children and no longer tied to communities the way our parents were, the void has been filled by pets. They become our partners, children, best mates or a combination of all three. It's hardly surprising then that research from the American Pet Product Manufacturers Association revealed 74% of pet owners see the animal as a family

When it comes to christening your doggie, moggie or budgie, there are a few face-saving factors to be considered **By David Smiedt**



**"So you're telling me
we're sticking
with 'Fluffy' then?"**



member. And you're not going to christen kin Mr Snuffle Guts are you?

And woe betide those who cross pet "parents" by getting it wrong. "While, we're seeing an increasing incidence of human names that are truly unisex – such as Coco, Jessie and Charlie – what is becoming more apparent is how particular pet owners are about the spelling and pronunciation of their animal's names," says Hennessy.

Pet names are also being influenced by the cult of celebrity. Not that this is new: see Lassie. For example, in the two years to June 2007, British pet insurer, Pet Line, saw a 46% increase in dogs and cats named after Kylie Minogue

"Oh yes," says Amanda Raine from Sydney dog day centre Dogs At Play, "we've seen Britneys, Parises and Beyoncés."

In addition to this, more serious old-school names of the Wallace and Miles ilk are being yelled across dog parks. According to Raine, however, there's also a resurgence in nomenclature so prosaic and parochial that it would make fun of you for

using words like "nomenclature".

"We're seeing more dogs with names that were popular a generation ago – your Kevin, Andrews, and Normans," says Raine. "There's something very Australian about it." And it's not just the boy dogs going blue collar. In my local park in Sydney's inner west, I've met two Esmes, three Rhonas and a Beatrice. It's a veritable 1965 tuckshop roster.

Multiculturalism is also getting in on the act with animals answering to all sorts of foreign terms. We've all seen a German shepherd called Fritz or a poodle named Marcel, but according to Amanda Raine, "There's a small move towards foreign words. We have a Pomeranian in day care whose name means 'little Lion' in Thai."

Keep it simple

So intricate is the business of naming pets that there are now entire websites (alldognames.com and greatcatnames.com) to assist the confused and uninspired. And this isn't just an overseas phenomenon, with

local sites like bowwow.com.au occupying cyberspace with intricate questionnaires to help find that perfect title.

Inputting my pooch's parameters – male, dog, blonde – it spewed forth 39 alternatives including Dwight, Custard and Zircon.

Regardless of what you name your pet, there are three things to keep in mind. Firstly, observe the newcomer for a few days to get a sense of their personality. It's always odd meeting a 'Bounder' who only moves to eat and evacuate. Second, if you want them to respond, shorter is better. As much as we'd like to believe otherwise, animals aren't attuned to titles but the repeated sound patterns we make when calling them. Anything over two syllables (Fifibelle) will probably cause more confusion than its worth. Finally, the name you choose needs to pass the shout test. Although Sexy Lexie may sound wittily risqué over a drink, chances are you're going to have to yell this name out hundreds, if not thousands, of times at high volume in public places over their lifetime. Might I suggest Barry?

INSECT EATERS



Willie wagtail



Yellow robin



Scrub wren



Brown flycatcher

With over 86,000 species of insects in Australia, it's no wonder so many of our birds dine on nothing else. And as well as the exclusively insectivorous, the nectar and seed-eaters join the feast, supplementing their usual diets with juicy insects.

The most familiar of the insect-eating birds in our gardens are the Flycatchers, most commonly seen as Willie wagtails, but Fairy wrens and Robins are frequent visitors in some locations while some of the larger insect-feeders include Magpies, Bee eaters, Kookaburras and Butcherbirds, to name a few.

Willie wagtails are ferocious predators, often seen darting under eaves and along exterior walls snatching up spiders or zigzagging through the air after flying insects. But most of the time they're on the ground hopping about pecking at insects.

Unlike most other birds they take no special precautions to conceal their nests, quite happily constructing them on

verandahs, in garden sheds, flowerpots, even on swinging gates, as if inviting us to be custodians of their precious nesting sites.

Both sexes help to build a neat nest from fine grasses, tightly bound with cobwebs and lined with fibers. Two to four eggs are laid but only about two-thirds of Willie wagtail eggs successfully produce fledglings due to the presence of natural predators and feral cats.

Fairy wrens A collective term for many species of small wrens, Fairy wrens are a favourite, with the males being some of the most exquisite small birds in the world.

Such adjectives as lovely, splendid and superb have stuck to wrens as names, reflecting the impact that the good nature of this bird species had on Australian early settlers.

The common names also reflect beauty and colour with Purple-backed, Red-winged, Blue-breasted and Purple-crowned

Two birds in the bush can be better than one in the hand. In this case, attracting birds to your garden keeps insects down as well as adding colourful eye candy.

Words and photographs by John Cooper

Bee eater



A male Superb wren



wrens making clear reference to their physical attributes.

They find insects in the garden but can also be attracted to a feeding table primed with small bits of cheese, mealworms, breadcrumbs and finely chopped fruit.

Robins If you live near native bush, colourful Robins may pass through your garden with the Yellow robin being the most likely and frequent visitor. With a splash of bright yellow, it will alight on a branch with one leg clinging above the other before dropping down onto an unsuspecting insect.

Dangerous predators

These smaller birds are sadly on the decline in most of our cities. Their eggs and chicks are easy meals for Currawongs, Kookaburras, Magpies and Butcherbirds, which also chase the smaller birds away from their territories. You can help arrest the decline by not feeding these larger species.

Facts and figures

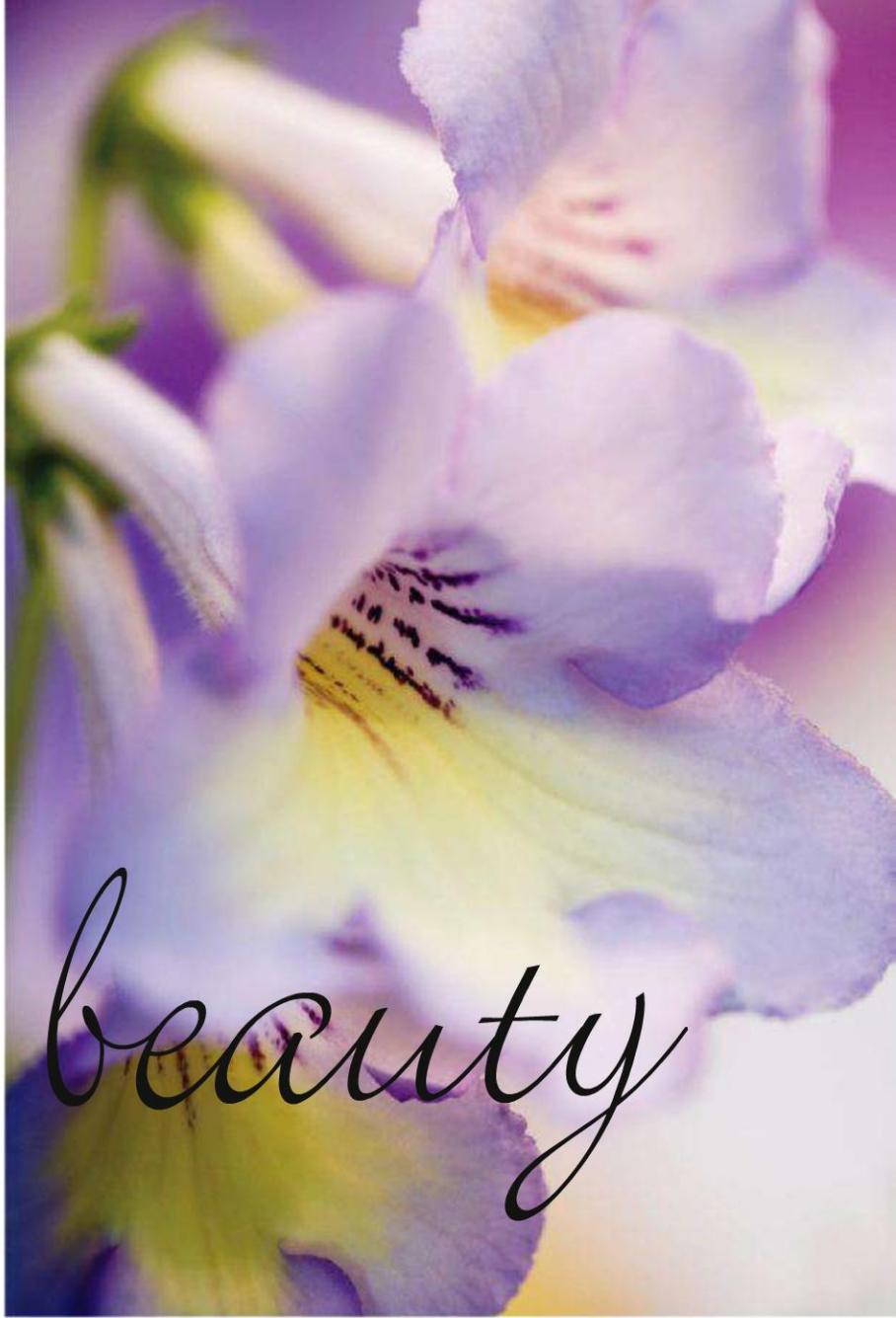
More than a million species of insects inhabit our planet. In Australia, 86,000 species have been identified with many more yet to be described. They inhabit every type of environment and though some are pests, most insects are not. Many are beneficial to us or the environment and most have no direct impact at all on our lives.

Not so bad?

The much maligned English blackbird is detested by most gardeners because of its annoying habit of scratching garden mulch and litter onto paving and neatly manicured lawns. However, the bird's insatiable appetite for insects, pesky snails and slugs more than makes up for its untidy foraging behavior!



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GAP Photos/Ron Evans



Photo: Steve Falcioni



Photolibrary

With their huge stunning flowers and simple growing requirements, it's hard to fathom why the beautiful Streptocarpus is so hard to find. Steve Falcioni tells us why they're worth the hunt



GAP Photos/Howard Rice

There are over a hundred different species of *Streptocarpus*, predominantly from South Africa, Madagascar and South East Asia. They're related to African violets and gloxinias, all belonging to the *Gesneriaceae* family. Despite the showy attributes of these plants, you are probably only familiar with one type: *Streptocarpus caulescens*. Variously called the False African violet or Nodding violet, this small mounding plant (right) is usually a mass of dainty mauve flowers carried on long wiry stems. A lovely plant for sure, but it's time you expanded your *Streptocarpus* repertoire.

Sexy *rexii*

The *Streptocarpus* we're focusing on are the hybrids derived mainly from *S. rexii*, native to South Africa. Commonly called Cape primroses or Nodding violets, they're rosette-forming plants whose tongue-shaped fleshy leaves, up to 30cm long, grow from the centre of the plant without producing branching stems.

Arching flower stalks emerge from the centre carrying clusters of flowers, held clear above the foliage. The trumpet-shaped flowers are large and showy, each up to 7cm across depending on the cultivar. My current favourite is 'Bright Eyes', with rich velvety purple flowers and a creamy white throat.

In warm frost-free climates you can grow them outdoors in a semi-shaded position with protection from the hot summer sun. Watch out for caterpillars as they seem to adore the foliage. But don't despair if you're from a colder climate as they also make excellent indoor plants. Even though I can grow them outside in Sydney, I prefer them indoors as they're just so striking.

Treat them like a less fussy African violet. Any plant I grow has to survive on tough love and I can happily report great success with streps. They have a fairly small root system and are best in smaller pots (15cm or less). Use a well-drained potting mix and position them where they'll receive plenty of bright indirect light. Just make sure that this spot doesn't get too warm in summer as they don't like to be really hot.

Take care of me

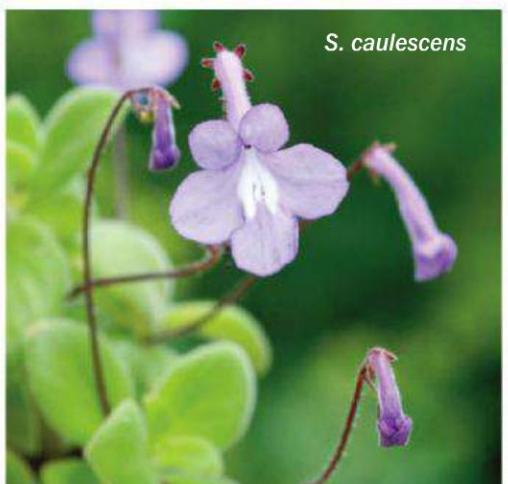
Allow streps to dry out a bit between watering. Drooping leaves tell you they're thirsty and they bounce back quickly. Give them a bit of organic fertiliser during the warmer months and they'll reward you with plenty of flowers. Cut back on the water and fertiliser during winter when they're less active.



GAP Photos / Maddie Thornhill



You can expect stunning flowers from spring right through to autumn.



Where to buy

The Australian Begonia Company grows streps and takes mail orders year round. Plants are posted in October. Australian Begonia Company, PO Box 915, Erica, Victoria 3825, (03) 5165 3394 or martincandy@bigpond.com. Company reps will also be at:

The Erica Begonia Festival, Erica, Victoria, 12–14 March 2011.

Gardening & Rare Plant Expo, Silvan, Victoria, 19–20 March 2011

Sydney International Orchid Fair, Castle Hill Showgrounds, New South Wales, 8–10 April 2011.

Collector's Plant Fair, Bilpin, New South Wales, 16–17 April 2011. Alternatively, attend an African Violet Society show. They often have streps for sale but it pays to arrive early as they sell fast.

Idyll Hours Nursery, Modanville (near Lismore) New South Wales, (02) 6628 2042. Nursery sales only, no mail orders.

GAP Photo/FHF Greenmedia



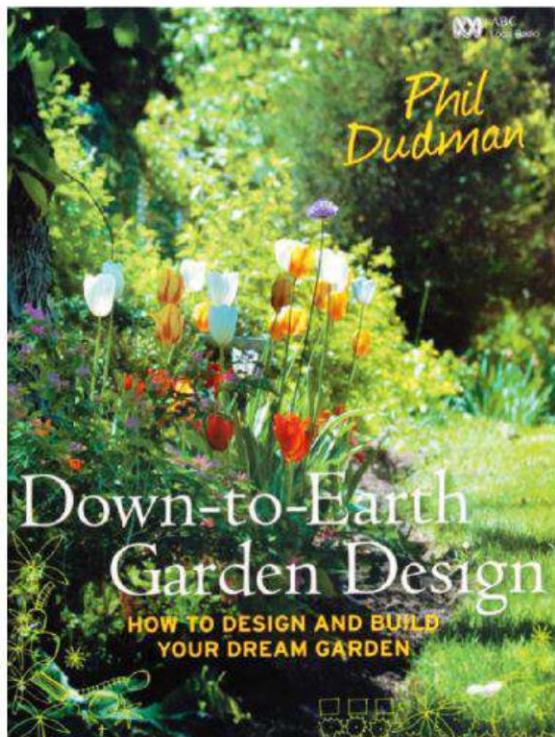
Take care when moving or repotting your plant as the foliage is fairly brittle.

Autumn's best

books

Reviewed by Helen Thompson

FANCY CURLING UP IN YOUR FAVOURITE CHAIR WITH A GOOD BOOK? PLAN FOR WARMER MONTHS OR RIGHT NOW WITH THE SEASON'S BEST TITLES.

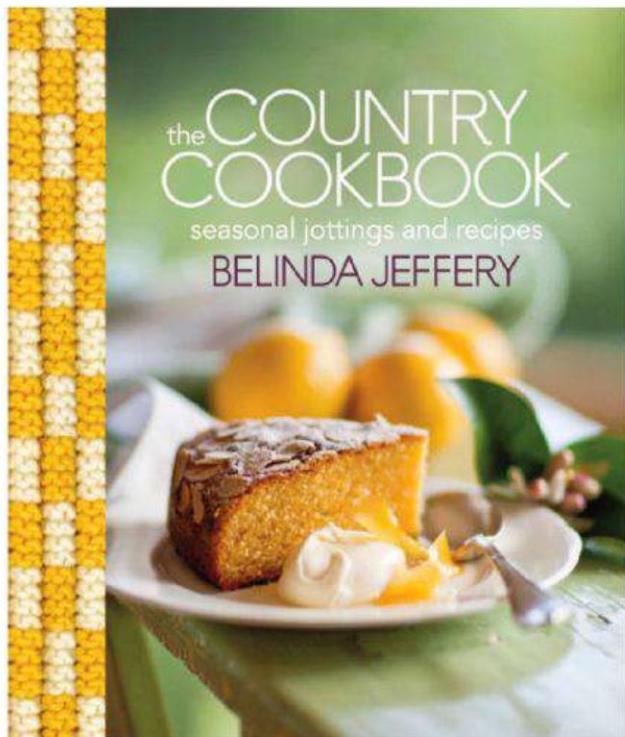


DOWN-TO-EARTH GARDEN DESIGN

By Phil Dudman

Phil Dudman sets out to demystify the creation of gardens, from concept to construction, for home gardeners. The book breaks this topic down into three parts: creating your own design, using ready-made designs and building your garden. It teaches you to take a close look at your property and gives you the skills – practical instructions are laid out in easy steps with clear illustrations – to turn your garden dreams into reality. It's an easy-to-read and highly instructive book.

Published by ABC Books, RRP \$35



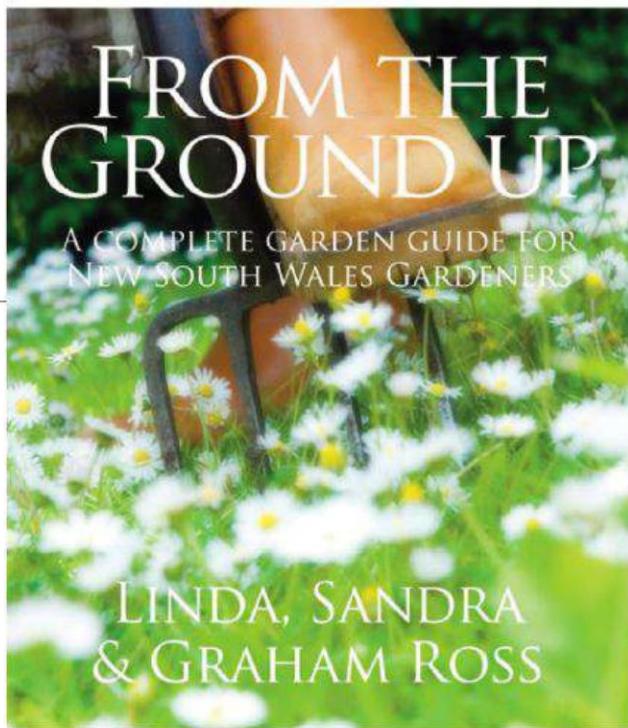
THE COUNTRY COOKBOOK

By Belinda Jeffery

I became totally absorbed in this beautiful book – and I don't enjoy cooking. *The Country Cookbook* follows a year in the life of its author since moving from Sydney to Mullumbimby on the far north coast of New South Wales. It's a very personal account, written as diary extracts, about her garden, family and life in general as well as the the food at the centre of it all. The delicious recipes range from marmalade to roast pumpkin with macadamia pesto and use locally available ingredients while drawing from international cuisines.

Published by Lantern/Penguin, RRP \$59.95

Grab a new book and settle down for a good read



FROM THE GROUND UP

By Linda, Sandra & Graham Ross

This is a companion edition to both Sophie Thompson and Jane Edmanson's books of the same name. Graham Ross is a respected horticulturist, whose 45-year career has spanned teaching, television, radio and publishing. His wife Sandra is also a horticulturist, garden writer, teacher and broadcaster, and their daughter Linda is a widely travelled garden writer and broadcaster. This is an important reference book for anyone in New South Wales wanting to start a garden, enhance an existing one or just learn more about gardening in the state.

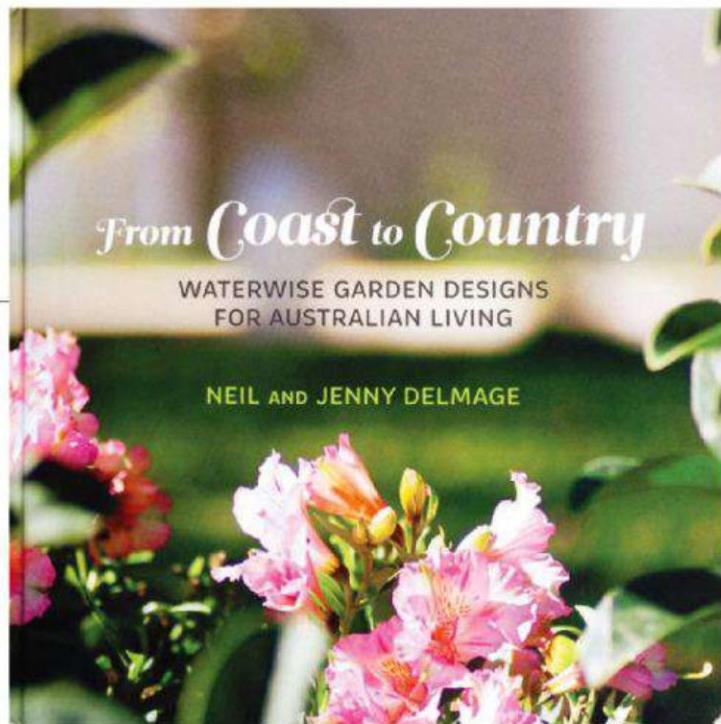
Published by Neutrog Australia, RRP \$64.95

FROM COAST TO COUNTRY

By Neil & Jenny Delmage

Neil and Jenny Delmage have been working together in their West Australian landscape design business, Naturescape Creative, for more than 20 years and their second book, *From Coast to Country*, showcases some of the beautiful classic gardens, both large and small, that Jenny and Neil have designed in that time and continue to be involved in. Great photographs and many of Jenny's concise drawings, give a comprehensive overview of each of the gardens featured.

Published by Freemantle Press, RRP \$49.95

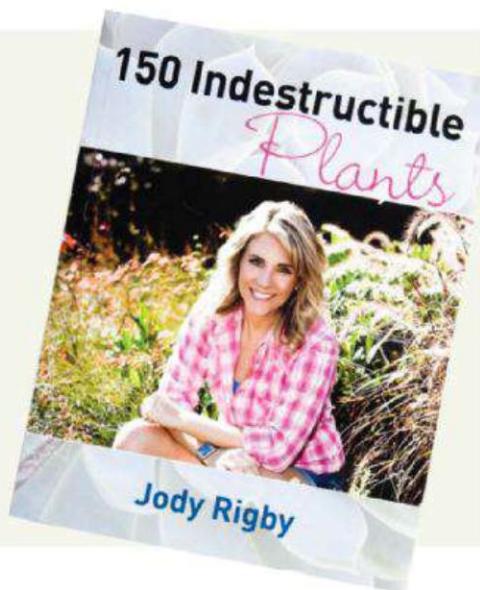


150 INDESTRUCTIBLE PLANTS By Jody Rigby

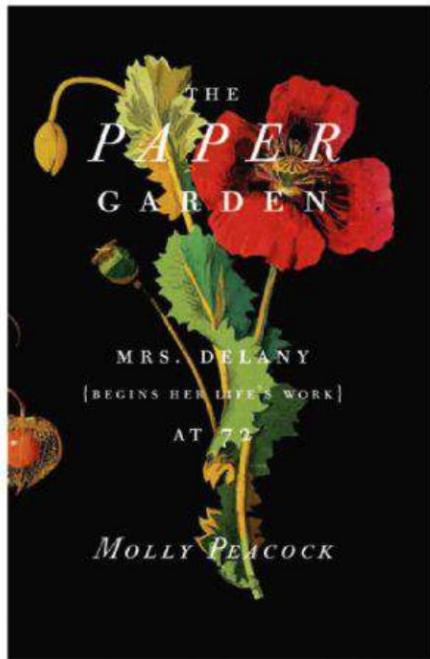
With this book, Jody Rigby has gathered together a clear and concise collection of plants that need a little care but are pretty difficult to destroy even if you neglect them. Jody has arranged her choices into chapters including feature, flowering, shade and "fabulous foliage" plants. The large full colour pictures and fresh layout enhance its usefulness considerably. This is a helpful guide for all Australian gardeners.

Published by New Holland Publishers, RRP \$29.95

WORTH A LOOK



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DELANY (BEGINS HER LIFE'S
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LIFE AND A STUDY ON THE
NATURE OF CREATIVITY.

Imagine starting your life's work at seventy-two. At just that age, Mary Granville Pendavves Delany (May 14, 1700–April 15, 1788), a fan of George Frideric Handel, a sometime dinner partner of satirist Jonathan Swift, a wearer of green-hooped satin gowns, and a fiercely devoted subject of blond King George III, invented a precursor of what we know as collage. One afternoon in 1772 she noticed how a piece of colored paper matched the dropped petal of a geranium. After making that vital imaginative connection between paper and petal, she lifted the eighteenth-century equivalent of an X-Acto blade (she'd have called it a scalpel) or a pair of filigree-handled scissors

AN EXTRACT

– the kind that must have had a nose so sharp and delicate that you could almost imagine it picking up a scent. With the instrument alive in her still rather smooth-skinned hand, she began to maneuver, carefully cutting the exact geranium petal shape from the scarlet paper.

Then she snipped out another.

And another, and another, with the trance-like efficiency of repetition – commencing the most remarkable work of her life.

Her previous seventy-two years in England and Ireland had already spanned the creation of Kew Gardens, the rise of English paper making, Jacobites thrown into the Tower of London, forced marriages, women's floral-embroidered stomachers, and the use of the flintlock musket – all of which, except for the musket, she knew very personally.

She was born Mary Granville in 1700 at her father's country house in the Wiltshire village of Coulston, matching her life with the start of this new century, one that would be shaped by many of her friends and acquaintances. She would see the rise of the coffee house (where she took refuge on the day of the coronation of George II) and of fabulously elaborate court gowns (one of which she designed). She would hear first-hand of the voyage of Captain Cook (financed partly by her friend the Duchess of Portland) and be astounded by that voyage's horticultural bonanza (instigated by her acquaintance Sir Joseph Banks). She would attend her hero Handel's *Messiah*. She would share a meal with the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni and read in a rapture Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Clarissa*. She would flirt with Jonathan Swift. In middle age, at mid-century, she would see the truth of his cudgel of an essay on Irish poverty, and in her old age she would feel the sting of a revolution on the other side of the world that divided North America into Canada and the United States.

By the time she commenced her great work, she had long outlived her uncle, the selfish Lord Lansdowne (a minor poet and playwright and patron of Alexander Pope); she had survived a marriage at age

seventeen to Alexander Pendarves, a drunken sixty-one-year-old squire who left her nothing but a widow's pension; she had tried to get a court position and found herself in a bust-up of a relationship with the peripatetic Lord Baltimore. But with a life-saving combination of propriety and inner fire, she also designed her own clothes, took drawing lessons with Louis Goupy, cultivated stalwart, lifelong friends (and watched her mentor William Hogarth paint a portrait of one of them), played the harpsichord and attended John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, owned adorable cats, and wrote six volumes' worth of letters – most of them to her sister, Anne Granville Dewes (1701–61), signifying a deep, cherished relationship that anyone with a sister would kill for.

She bore no children, but at forty-three she allowed herself to be kidnapped by love and to flout her family to marry Jonathan Swift's friend Dean Patrick Delany, a Protestant Irish clergyman. They lived at Delville, an eleven-acre estate near Dublin, where Mary attended to a multitude of crafts, from shell decoration to crewelwork, and, with the Dean, renovated his lands into one of the first picturesque gardens in the British Isles.

But she made the spectacular mental leap between what she saw and what she cut four years after he died, and eleven years after her sister died. She was staying with her insomniac friend Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, the Duchess Dowager of Portland, at the fabulous Bulstrode, an estate of many acres in Buckinghamshire. The Duchess, who would stay up being read to for most of the night and rarely rose before noon, was one of the richest women in England. Her Dutch-gabled fortress, presiding over its own park, with its own aviary, gardens, and private zoo, housed her collections of shells and minerals, and later the Portland Vase, a Roman antiquity which now occupies a spot in the British Museum. By then the two women had been friends for more than four decades. (They met when Margaret was a little girl and Mary was in her twenties. Margaret would always have been referred to by her title,



The book is illustrated with 35 mixed-media collages by Mary Delany, such as this one of a Cluster Damask, from the British Museum.

except by those of us centuries later who seek to know her on a first-name basis. Mary would have called Margaret "Duchess," and Margaret would have called Mary "Mrs.")

Snip.

Mary Delany took the organic shapes she had cut and recomposed them in the mirror likeness of that geranium, pasting up an exact, life-sized replica of the flower on a piece of black paper.

Then the Duchess popped in.

She couldn't tell the paper flower from the real one.

Mrs. D., which is what they affectionately

call her at the British Museum, dubbed her paper and petal paste-up a *flower mosaick*, and in the next ten years she completed nearly a thousand cut-paper botanicals so accurate that botanists still refer to them – each one so energetically dramatic that it seems to leap out from the dark as onto a lit stage. Unlike pale botanical drawings, they are all done on deep black backgrounds. She drenched the front of white laid paper with black watercolor to obtain a stage-curtain-like darkness. Once dry, she'd paste onto these backgrounds hundreds – and I mean hundreds upon hundreds – of the tiniest dots, squiggles,

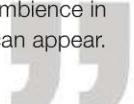
scoops, moons, slivers, islands, and loops of brightly colored paper, slowly building up the verisimilitude of flora.

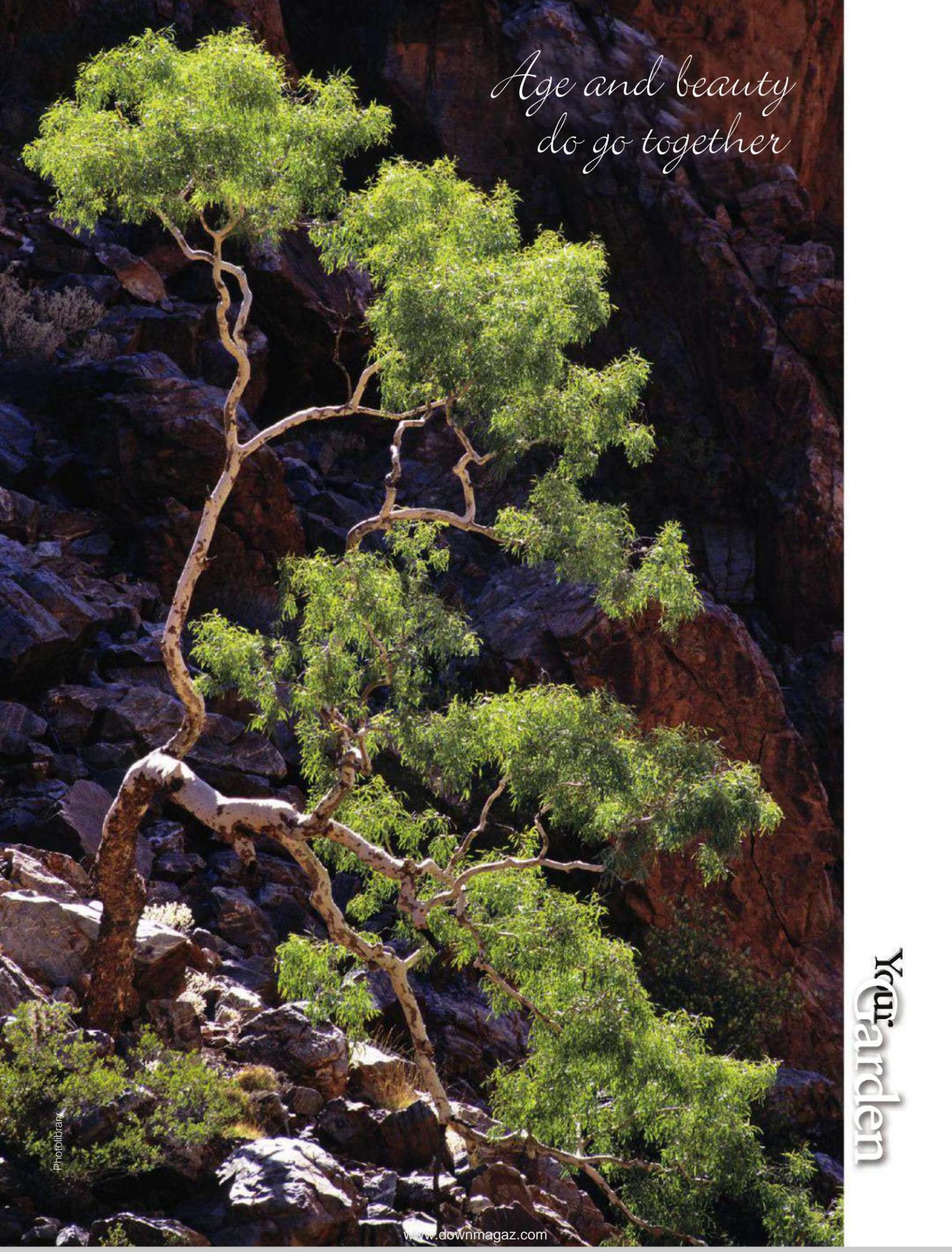
"I have invented a new way of imitating flowers," she wrote with astonishing understatement to her niece in 1772. How did she have the eyesight to do it, let alone the physical energy? How, with her eighth-decade knuckles and wrists, did she manage the dexterity? Did her arm muscles not seize up? Now Mrs. D.'s works rustle in leather-edged volumes in the British Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings Study Room, where they have been sequestered since her descendant, Lady Llanover, donated them in 1895. Seventy-two years old. It gives a person hope.

Who doesn't hold out the hope of starting a memorable project at a grand old age? A life's work is always unfinished and requires creativity till the day a person dies. Even if you've managed major accomplishments throughout your life and don't really need a model for making a mark, you do need one for enriching an ongoing existence.

Where was she when she cut out her first mosaick? In the spacious ground-floor apartments that the Duchess had assigned her at Bulstrode. What time was it? Probably sometime in the morning. At night, with short candles burning (she preferred short candles because they shed more intense, lower light), it would have been time for embroidery or handiwork. Was it messy? Oh, it was messy. The Duchess was always having to clean up all their projects when she was expecting guests: her vast collection of shells and their flaking, her minerals and their dust, her exotic plants and their shedding particles of leaves.

Mrs. Delany did not pick up a quill pen, nor did she draw. Instead, she entered a mesmerized state induced by close observation. If you have ever looked at a word so long that it becomes unfamiliar, you have crossed into a similar state, seizing on detail, then seizing up, because that very focus blurs the context of meaning. This is the mental ambience in which a ghost of something can appear. A memory.





*Age and beauty
do go together*

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